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Elsa Hosk is an absolute Angel. Proof provided.

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CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS AND ILLUSTRATORS
Jean-Philippe Delhomme, Sante D'Orazio, Todd Eberle, Tiziano Magni, Wayne Maser, Philippe Petit-Roulet, Bill Phelps, Mark Platt, Chris Stein

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Lukas I. Alpert, Andrea Bennett, Debbie Harry, Michael Kaplan, Hooman Majd, Ben Mezrich, T. Cole Rachel, Dave Reeves, Jack Sheehan, Barbara Sicuranza, Chris Stein

CONTRIBUTING DIGITAL EDITORS
Steve Huff, Adam K. Raymond, Mikelle Street (style)

SPECIAL THANKS
Lisa Benson, Yaniv Evan, Alex Gobo, Betina Goldstein, Grace Hwang, Chandra Knee, Sean Lamm, George Maier, Paulina Olivares, Diane Prete, Danielle Quebrado, Shiara Robinson, Taylor Shields, Dean Snyder, Michael Weaver

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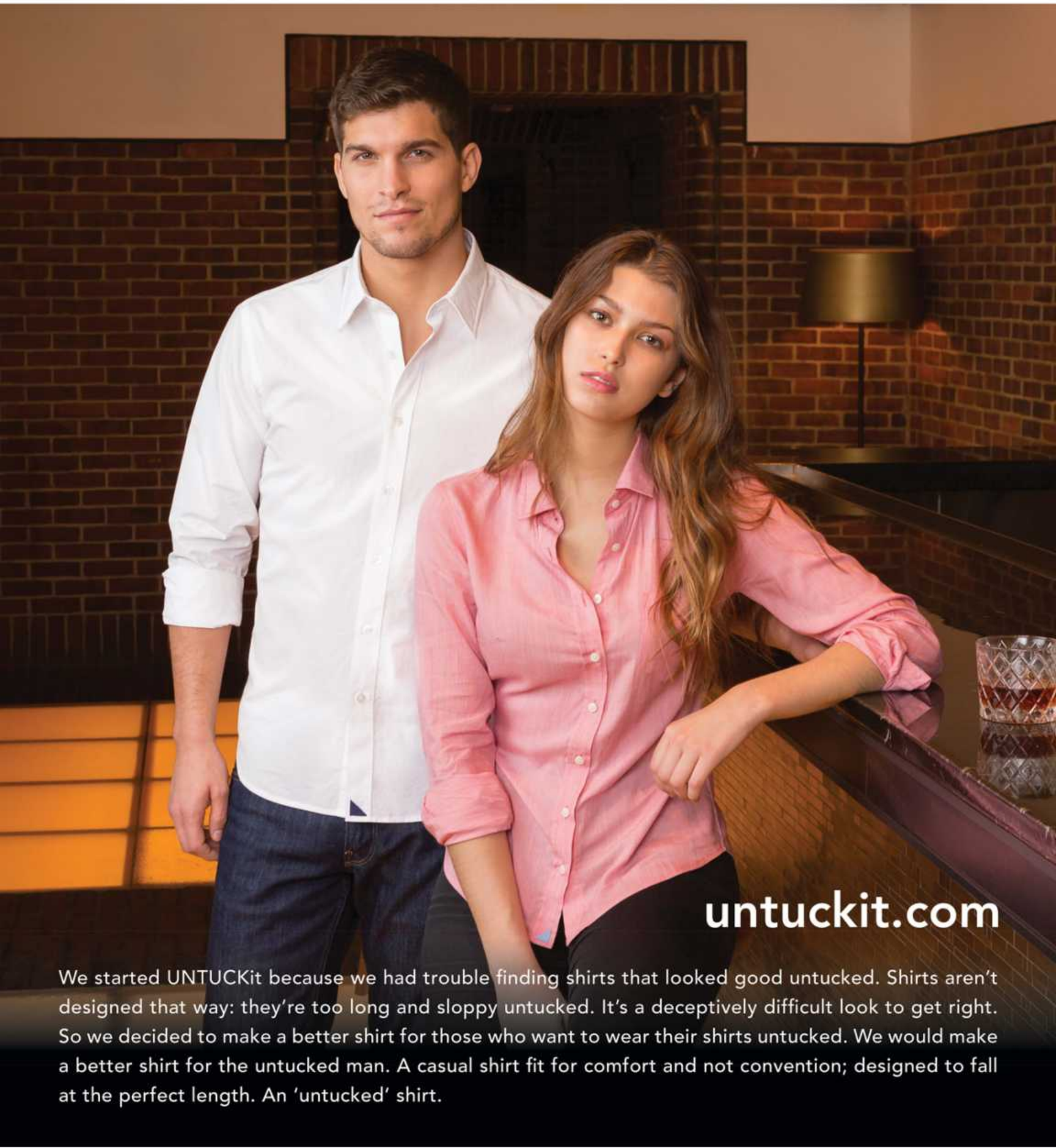

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We started UNTUCKit because we had trouble finding shirts that looked good untucked. Shirts aren't designed that way: they're too long and sloppy untucked. It's a deceptively difficult look to get right. So we decided to make a better shirt for those who want to wear their shirts untucked. We would make a better shirt for the untucked man. A casual shirt fit for comfort and not convention; designed to fall at the perfect length. An 'untucked' shirt.

Ask MAXIMUS *Dictator of Decorum*

Badges? We don't need no stinking badges! Yeah, we follow the rules, but we make the rules up as we go along. We rule the rules.

A lot of guys think there is a sort of Ten Commandments of how to dress and behave. And there was, sort of, until somebody smashed them to bits like Moses did with the tablets of the law. Maybe the Men Commandments were smashed by Elvis. Others might say Oscar Wilde, Frank Sinatra, James Dean, Mick Jagger. But the point is that the laws of dress and behavior are evolutionary. We have to adapt or reinvent them now and then according to prevailing conditions.

It used to be said that gentlemen did not wear white until after Easter and then not after Labor Day. But after canoeing across Greenland and playing golf in Staten Island on Christmas, I came to recognize climate change, and declared that white can now be worn from the beginning of spring training until the World Series. After that we can wear "winter white," which allows white sneakers, white parkas, toggle coats, and anything passing for alpine camouflage. Now more than ever, we must be adaptable.

Things change fast. If you have any questions, ask me. I might be wrong, but I'll definitely have an opinion. And hey, you, Thou Shalt Not Flip the Collar of Thine Polo!

When did it become commonplace for powerful men like the president to stop wearing pocket squares?
The first "atomic age" president, Harry Truman, a natty onetime haberdasher, wore the "TV fold," a slim rectangle of white linen showing above the breast pocket. Dwight Eisenhower was a sartorial innovator as a general, inventing the Eisenhower Army jacket that resembled the motorcycle jacket Brando wore and the jean jacket worn by James Dean. Eisenhower went hankie-free as a civilian. Handsome lady killer JFK wore a little flash of hankie under his lapel, while his successor, LBJ, favored a multi-peaked sailboat regatta of linen triangles. Dick Nixon ditched the pocket linen—too bad; he could have used it for a good wipe when he got the fatal sweats during his TV debates with Kennedy or for polishing his bowling ball. He probably thought the hankie was fussy. Gerald Ford was also a square but never had one in his pocket. No-nonsense Jimmy Carter also went plain—not that he wasn't concerned with his appearance. He actually changed the part in his hair from right to left while in office and added some Just for Men tint, too. Dutch Reagan, Hollywood's president, wore a pocket square the size of a dinner napkin when he was just a movie star, but as commander in chief he had an exec look with French cuffs and a white linen peak in his pocket. Ever since, the hankie has deserted the White House. President Clinton, a.k.a. Bubba, went without pocket decor, even when blowing a sax in shades. Bush II, a.k.a. Dubya, was as plain a dresser as he was a plain speaker. President Obama, a svelte minimalist, also keeps his pocket unloaded. What's next? A Chanel scarf? Maybe. Only one of the Republican wannabes, Dr. Carson, has sported a pocket swatch. Where have all the hankies gone? Perhaps it was the rise of that new compulsory accessory, the flag lapel pin that is universally worn by politicos and CEOs alike. The pocket squares distract from that patriotic pin! Why no one has introduced a Stars and Stripes hankie, an even more flagrant display of homeland fervor, escapes me.

Is art dead? What's the pulse of contemporary American culture?
It kind of hurts to say this, but fashion is catching up to art as a cultural force. Why? Because the hog-wild speculation in art—cranked-out, celebrified, institutionally promoted art, put in storage to await auction—has skewed the whole racket. Fashion, at its best, is creative, democratic, personal, and life-changing, and everyone can afford some.

What should you wear to an art gallery opening?
Art should be about essence: Who is the artist, and what does the art say and do? So the best way to dress is by looking like yourself, in full, in depth. Hopefully it doesn't involve a clown costume, a conceptual Halloween outfit, or some form of "Hey, over here!" grandstanding.

How do you feel about dressing up leather jackets? A Perfecto, in particular.
It's the only male item of apparel suitable for brooches. In my youth it was nicely executed pins like BRITS OUT OF IRELAND, maybe a discreet Chairman Mao pin, a peace symbol, or a Tao pin. My son's Perfecto sports some political pins with initials that I'd rather not know the meaning of.

Please comment on this whole sweatpants thing.
I have some nice ones. I wear them to, at, and from the gym, along with some suitable disguise. I do like my new ones, which have zippers at the ankle and fit well. I am open to possible use on short economy-airline runs requiring physique-challenging flexibility, and also, of course, with dark glasses and a suitable disguise. I wore some of those black ones with stripes for Halloween a couple years back. I was going as a sucker emcee on social security. I recently read that some swank authority issued rules for wearing sweatpants, but at this point my only rule is "Thou shalt sweat."

In this age of tailored shirts, can you wear a vest if you aren't a bartender and it is not part of a uniform?
Have a couple three-piece suits for winter wear. The suit with vest was invented in an era without central heating, but the vest also gives the office dweller a bit more control over his cubicle temperature, and it looks trimmer than sitting there in your shirtsleeves. Plus, it gives you more pocket capacity—enough to tote a pack of Camels, a small iPod, a pillbox, pepper spray, Band-Aids, a magnifying glass, a pitch pipe, a guitar pick, hair elastics...all that miscellanea that seems to have no place of its own.

What is an appropriate outfit for a grad-school student? One that is far from slovenly without being overly formal?
I don't think of "grad student" as something you dress for. There is a kind of grad-school look that after some wear and tear turns into professorial. Corduroy suits, tweed jackets with leather elbow patches, pocket protectors, blue oxford-cloth button-downs, shell cordovan oxfords, slightly too wide rep ties, warm-looking socks, old Jack Purcells. The best you can hope for is somewhat enhanced cred leading to a sort of cafeteria tenure.

What is your take on the full Windsor knot?
I like to call it the full Saxe-Coburg knot, in memory of the original name of the clan now known as the House of Windsor, the Brits' German overlords. I tend to agree with Ian Fleming, who in *From Russia with Love* called the knot "the mark of a cad." It's big and showy, and its symmetry gives it a sort of anal-retentive, control-freak air. It was the preferred knot of *The Odd Couple*'s Felix Unger. I prefer the casual, asymmetrical four-in-hand knot, which I sometimes refer to as the Half Klugman because it's the best knot when you intend to wear your tie at half-mast with an open collar.

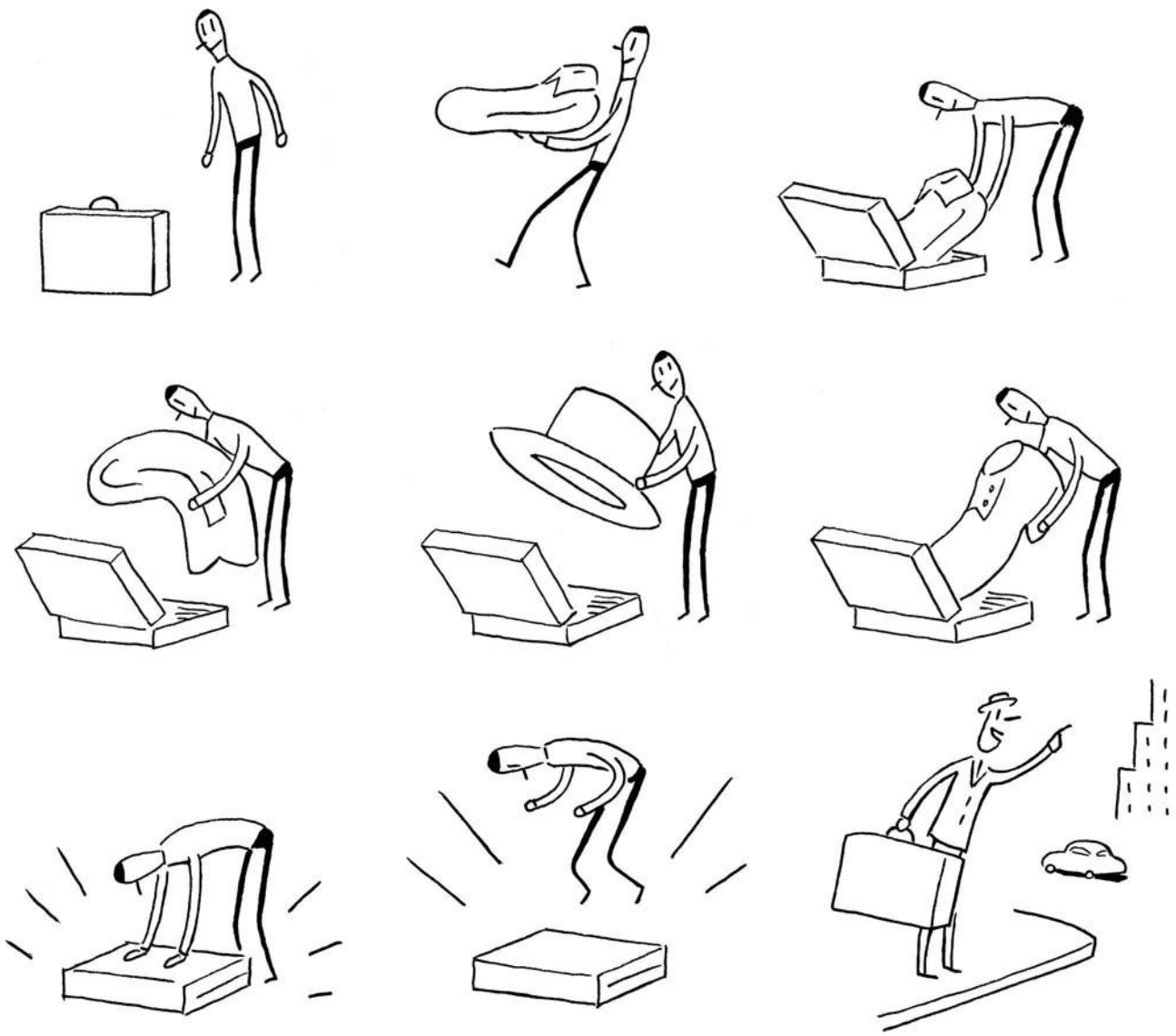
Column by GLENN O'BRIEN *Illustrations by* JEAN-PHILIPPE DELHOMME

Send questions for Maximus to gobrien@maxim.com.
Follow Glenn O'Brien on Twitter @lordrochester.

What do you wear to a gallery opening?
Your signature look, of course!

PACK MENTALITY

You'll never pack perfect, but you can pack smart. How to achieve suitcase symbiosis.



Years ago, before bespoke luggage maker Goyard was a brand well-known in the U.S. (or anywhere outside of France, for that matter) and while a certain Louis was not just a former French king but the king of handbags everywhere, I strolled into the Goyard store on the slightly less-traveled end of the Rue Saint Honoré and saw, on top of an assortment of handsome trunks, an odd-looking one. It was long and narrow and opened in the middle, revealing two sections with long leather belts to secure the contents. The salesperson, spying a potential American with money, immediately sidled up to me in the empty store and asked if I "knew" Goyard. *Oui,* I did, and I also knew the repeating chevron pattern was a mark of understated snobbery—only those "in the know" would recognize the mark. Above all, Goyard represented travel—stylish travel—and this particular piece I was eyeing was a trunk for books. Yes, books, or at least those impossible to live without on a journey.

Text by HOOMAN MAJD *Illustration by* PHILIPPE PETIT-ROULET

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"Whatever anyone tells you, you will never, ever pack your bags perfectly. You will either overpack or underpack; you will always regret not bringing that one sweater or shirt or extra pair of shoes, and you will certainly be dismayed at your choice of neckties and socks."

The salesman assured me that the firm had made exactly the same case for Hemingway, who always traveled with his books. I wanted to remind him that the age of steamship travel was over and although we were not yet in the age of tablets, we were already in the age of undignified jet travel, too-short journeys to too-faraway places, travel with little time and very little space for leisure reading. So even though I couldn't afford a Goyard trunk made for me, in the size I preferred, with my initials hand-painted on the side, I had other excuses to fall back on.

Sadly, travel isn't what it used to be (and neither is reading, or books). Happily, though, ordinary folk can afford travel these days. In Europe, EasyJet can take you from London to Kraków for less than the cost of lunch for two. But travel means luggage, no matter the length of the trip or the class of service. And luggage rarely flies free anymore. Packing your luggage, then, is a bit of an art.

Whatever anyone tells you, you will never, ever pack your bags perfectly. You will either overpack or underpack; you will always regret not bringing that one sweater or shirt or extra pair of shoes, and you will certainly be dismayed at your choice of neckties and socks. The carry-on you decided would be the perfect size shrinks radically when faced with a few extra hours in duty free, where everything starts to look like a deal, at least in a foreign currency.

I used to travel with bridle-leather suitcases. Until one airline, despite the "first-class" tag prominently attached (I wasn't paying), put a deep gash in one of them that extended the length of the lid. (The suitcases did come with heavy canvas protector sleeves, but I refused to use them since they seemed to defeat the whole point of having beautiful leather bags.) While I didn't mind my suitcases being well-aged, I didn't want them completely destroyed, which is what I imagined would happen with a few more flights. I fell back to using my Globe-Trotter—a pressed-fiberboard suitcase I've owned since boarding school. These have become as expensive, for some strange reason, as bridle-leather ones—and mine, now in its third decade of use, is only slightly worse for wear despite having circled the globe numerous times. The thing about Globe-Trotters and bridle-leather cases is that, unlike today's suitcases with retractable handles and wheels, they are essentially empty boxes, easy to organize, with straps to hold your goods in place. They don't contain awkward ridges where the handle stores deep in the body of the case, so you have a nice big drawer for your shirts, underwear, and socks when you set the suitcase down on the luggage rack in a hotel.

Despite my fondness for the old-school suitcase and my general antipathy toward that modern invention the wheel, I finally had to admit that wheeled luggage makes sense today, especially the four-wheeled kind that somehow seems a more stylish presentation than the one you drag behind you. You gently nudge it along, and sometimes you can even let go of it as it glides through the airport. The all-aluminum kind is ideal—these are not only the best-looking by far, but the dents and scratches they collect add a sort of machine-age retro character that plastic cannot duplicate. They are usually out of the price range of most of us, but they have a long life. Composite materials are nearly as good. I prefer dark, solid colors, with no visible branding. Just do your own Goyard thing and "paint" (I use a broad Sharpie in silver, gold, or white) your initials on the top, side, and back so that however the case tumbles down the chute, it is unmistakably yours. I still use the Globe-Trotter, but only when I want to feel important, which is less often than I'd like. (If I'm ever invited onto Air Force One, even on John Kerry's 757, I'll be sure to use that, or maybe the bridle leather.)

The limited selection of cargo a stylish suitcase accommodates, and what one wears while wheeling it, are, of course, as important as the luggage. However long the trip is, I rarely bring more clothes than a week without laundry services would require. I know that most think laundry prices in hotels are outrageous—and they are—but at least you're not paying a fortune for hotel phone calls anymore, and it's probably a business expense; go ahead and splurge. Your clothes will usually come back to your room looking better than ever. (Or you can always run to the nearest H&M and buy new clothes for as much as the laundry service will cost. Another rule of packing: Make sure there is enough room in your luggage for a few purchases.)

Packing a week's worth of clothes simplifies matters: You need seven of everything except sweaters (in the cold season) or suits, jackets, trousers, or jeans. Ideally, you will have worn your jeans en route, as well as a sport coat—that eliminates two items. Depending on where you're going, what you're going for, and who you are, you may need a suit, but never more than two, if one is solid gray and the other solid navy. You also never need more than two pairs of shoes: one pair in the suitcase and the other, preferably a slip-on, to wear while traveling as well as in more casual settings. If you don't wear suits, or won't need to more than once or twice during the trip, you can substitute casual pants (such as khakis), and perhaps a casual jacket, for one or both of the suits.

No matter your suitcase—leather, fiberboard, composite, or soft-sided—always pack as many socks in your shoes as possible, and the shoes in shoe bags so they don't soil your clothes or your luggage. (Not every town is fastidious about enforcing dog-poop-scooping laws.) Shirts should be folded—try having your local cleaner return them to you folded before you go on a trip—and pants just need to be folded in half. Turning a suit jacket inside out before folding helps reduce creases, but I don't stress the creasing—a hot shower with the bathroom door closed and the suit hanging on the towel rack usually eliminates most creases, unless your clothes are made of 100 percent polyester, of course. In which case, you have more important things to worry about than just creases.

I have two or three Dopp kits I've used over the years—I like my bridle-leather one, except it's like the luggage: one big empty space. I find I use a canvas kit that has a few pockets inside to help organize things like nail clippers, sewing kit, etc., which tend to get frustratingly lost in the leather one. But I like my kit to be as beautiful as my luggage—it is, after all, what I look at every morning and evening on a trip. It's also what the hotel maid looks at every day, and you don't want her to think you have no taste, right?

Finally, your carry-on bag or briefcase should be stylish, leather or canvas, and wheel-free. What kind of man (or woman) can't carry a small bag? Are we that lazy? The bag should hold your computer, iPad or Kindle, plus a magazine or two, and have enough room for airport purchases and even extra emergency storage, in case you bought one too many items on your trip that will absolutely not fit in your suitcase. It's all pretty simple, this travel preparation, but not scientific. You will still have regrets. The art is in minimizing them.

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FAST FRIENDS

In an L.A. alley, Yaniv Evan of Powerplant Motorcycles is seduced by speed.

Text by DAVE REEVES
Photographed by BILL PHELPS

(Her) *Overalls,* KSUBI. *Tank,* RAILS. *Neck scarf,* stylist's own (worn throughout). *Belt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES. *Silver wrist chain,* UNBOUNDED (worn throughout). *Ring,* stylist's own (worn throughout). *Shoes,* TOPSHOP. (Him) *Top,* MERZ B. SCHWANEN. *Watch,* vintage. *Leather pants,* vintage.

1968 Triumph Bonneville

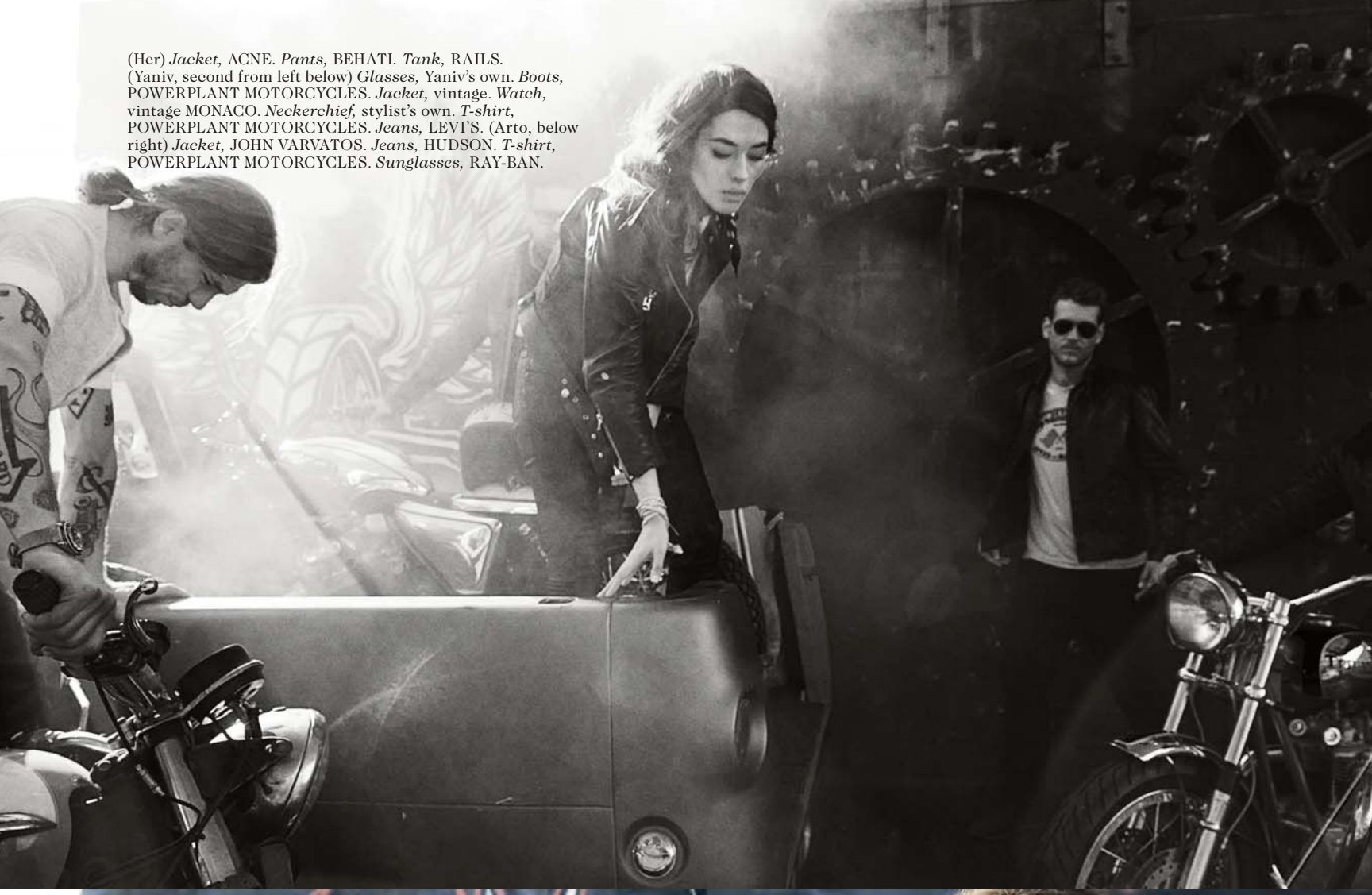
- Air-cooled, overhead valve parallel twin.
- 750cc
- 71mm x 82mm bore and stroke
- 12:1 compression
- 65 horsepower
- 4-speed transmission
- 363 lbs.

1971 Norton Commando 850

- Air-cooled, overhead valve parallel twin
- 850cc
- 77mm x 89mm bore and stroke
- 12:1 compression
- 60 horsepower
- 4-speed transmission
- 419 lbs.

This customized Triumph's polished metal and braided stainless steel hoses promise performance, and the air-cooled 750cc parallel twin delivers with help from a pair of Dellorto carburetors and free-flowing velocity stacks. This bike's output easily tops the 49 horsepower that engines like this delivered when they left the factory in 1968.

(Her) *Jacket,* ACNE. *Pants,* BEHATI. *Tank,* RAILS. (Yaniv, second from left below) *Glasses,* Yaniv's own. *Boots,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES. *Jacket,* vintage. *Watch,* vintage MONACO. *Neckerchief,* stylist's own. *T-shirt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES. *Jeans,* LEVI'S. (Arto, below right) *Jacket,* JOHN VARVATOS. *Jeans,* HUDSON. *T-shirt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES. *Sunglasses,* RAY-BAN.



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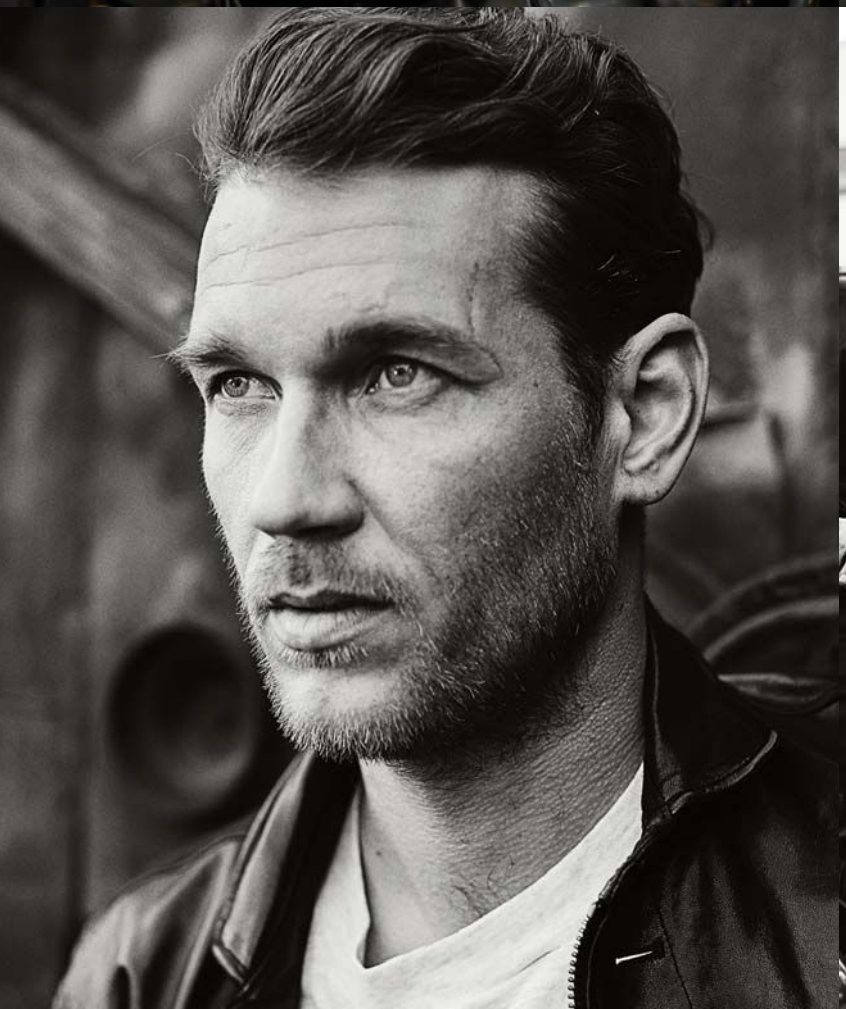
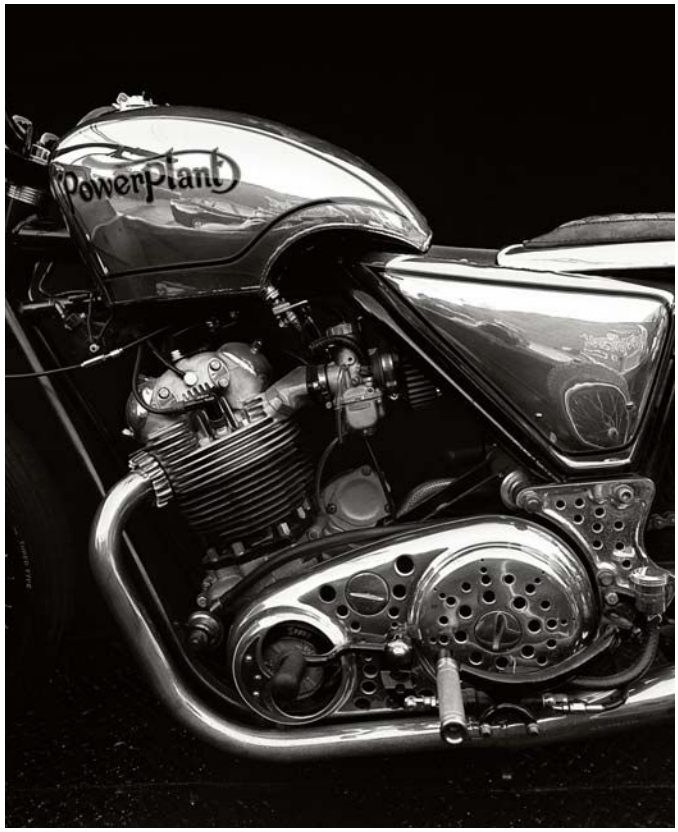


This page: (Orleb) *Shirt,* MERZ B. SCHWANEN. *Hat,* SCHAEFFERS GARMENT HOTEL. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE. (Arto) *Jacket,* JOHN VARVATOS. *Jeans,* HUDSON. *T-shirt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES.

In between shops hawking vape devices and studded bras on Melrose Avenue, the discerning eye is drawn to Powerplant Motorcycles' storefront, with FOR THE LOVE OF MOTORCYCLES emblazoned over the entrance. A Norton Commando with a girder-style front end sits in the display window. The sprockets on the bike have been modified with lightning holes, and the primary covers are drilled out as well—this is a fast bike that's been made lighter for flat-track racing. The modern, four-piston Brembo brakes on the rear hub indicate that the rider can stop this beast at its highest speeds. The battery and oil tank have been painstakingly hidden under a hand-stitched leather seat in order to display the 850cc Norton Commando engine without distraction, and its black heart of iron sits alone, center frame, clenched like a fist. The designer has allowed the weight and authority of this engine to rake the bike into an aggressive forward stance. The only adornment is the word POWERPLANT pin-striped on a hand-



formed aluminum tank in the Norton font. This bike is emblematic of a style minted by Powerplant owner Yaniv "Neevo" Evan: "No paint, no Bondo, no sugar coating. Just a high-performance engine with a four-speed transmission and custom brake system ready to tear it up."

Inside, the Powerplant retail shop is stocked with all the essentials needed for two-wheel riding. The racks are filled with a mixture of distressed leather and modern armored Rokker jackets and helmets made by Bell and Biltwell. Race fairings and thunderhead pipes are stored in the rafters overhead. Everything about the shop—the sign out front, the Norton in the window, the furniture, all of it—serves to remind the customer that Powerplant Motorcycles is about advancing motorhead gestalt in Southern California. I found the mastermind behind Powerplant, Evan, in the garage out back, building a bike from scratch. His machine shop is what you'd imagine a master designer at the top of his game would have: design trophies, exotic fuel tanks, drill presses, and lathes.

The state of the shop is that of an engineer and artist at work, with project models shaped in cardboard next to half-finished ideas waiting on stands for the next burst of inspiration. One of his assistants likened Evan's attention to detail to fire ants eating his brain. This is a good thing. Motorcycling has made great advances on the backs of grease monkeys who believe that OCD isn't a disorder if it makes you go faster.

On this night I found Evan and his shop rats bent over a '68 Triumph TT Bonneville outfitted with a 1946 Harley Springer front end, the Dellorto carbs and velocity stacks protruding two inches longer than stock. The mechanics were rapt in sincere concentration—poking, prodding, looking for flaws. Discussions were over as soon as Evan stomped the kick-starter and the engine fired up. The shop reverberated with steady detonations that were as loud as bombs.

The sound of a well-tuned Triumph is embedded in the collective unconscious. It's Steve McQueen outrunning Nazis in *The Great Escape*. It's the infernal chop of Brando in *The Wild Ones* coming to kick your little town apart. It's the growl that drowned out the crowd for Evel Knievel when he (almost) jumped that fountain in Vegas. It's so badass that Elvis bought Triumphs for the entire "Memphis Mafia" so they could be heard coming when they were taking care of business.

Once the bike was running, Evan had to take it out for a spin. "Air-cooled" means you've got to keep moving, preferably at 90 miles an hour. Evan stomped the shifter, seating first gear with the metallic clang of a shell being loaded into an artillery piece. Pure ecstasy was the look on Evan's face as he twisted his wrist and the bike ran off faster than a scalded cat.

When the fury of the Triumph engine was finally diminished by distance, we were left with the thin squeak of a rusty weather vane on the roof and some muttered threats from an unseen neighbor about calling the cops if we didn't stop the racket.

If you ever find yourself lost in the plastic Hollywood wasteland, do yourself a favor and duck into Powerplant Motorcycles to bear witness as Yaniv Evan forges new classics from his garage in the alley out back.

Opposite page: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE. *Pants,* BEHATI. *Tank,* RAILS. *Boots,* TOPSHOP. (Him) *Vintage jacket,* SAN DIEGO LEATHER. *T-shirt,* BEAUTIFUL FÜL. *Jeans,* LEVI'S. *Shoes,* CHIPPEWA. *Sunglasses*, RAY-BAN.

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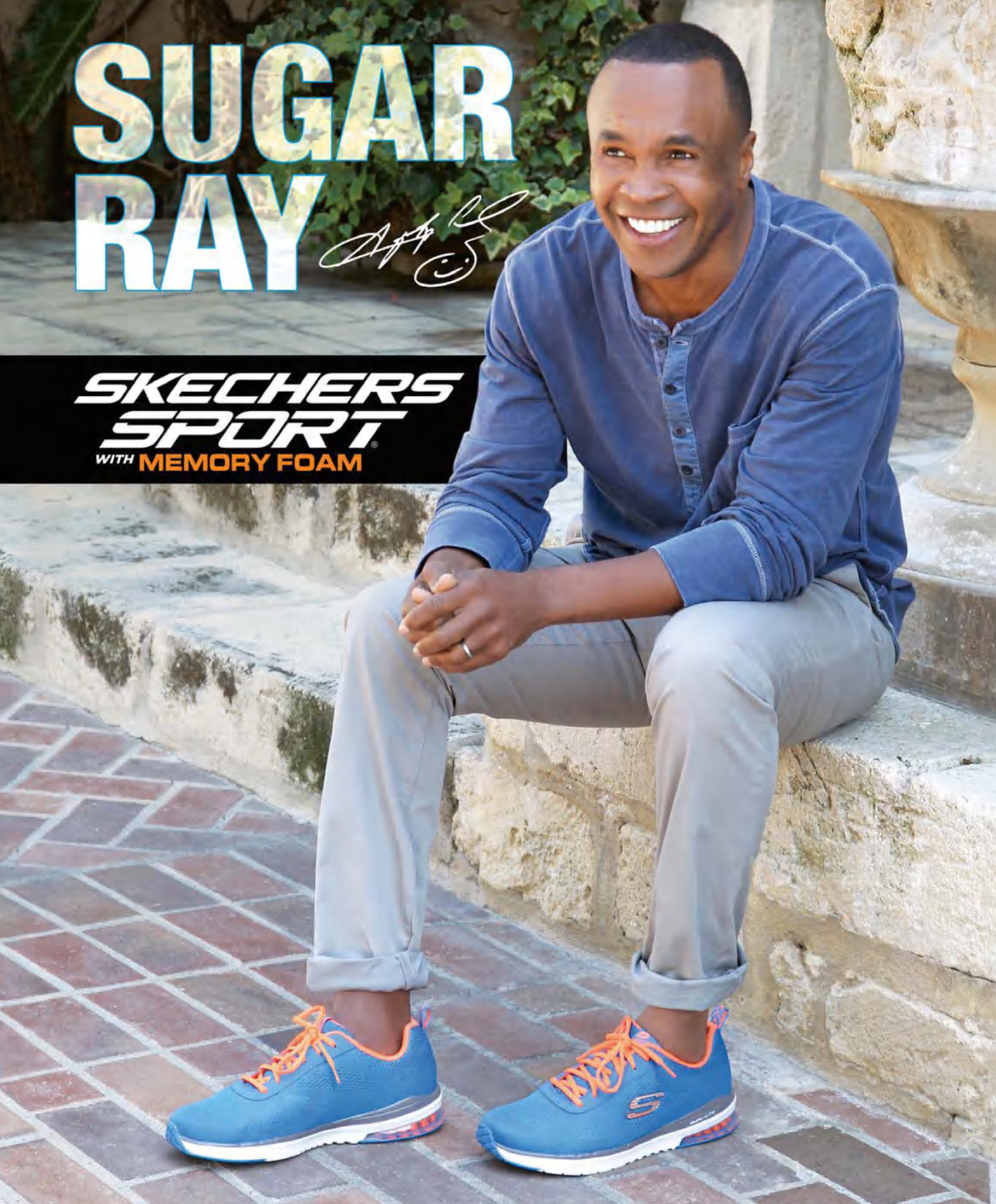
THE ALL-NEW TACOMA

This page: (Her) *Gloves,* vintage. *Helmet,* vintage. Previous page: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE. *Pants,* BEHATI. *Tank,* RAILS. *Boots,* TOPSHOP.

For more information, see page 94.
Styling, Yohanna Logan.
Hair and makeup, Adrienne Herbert for Art Department using Make Up Forever and R+Co Hair Products.
Grooming, Mishelle Parry for Grant's Golden Brand.
Photographed on location at Powerplant Motorcycles in Los Angeles; powerplantchoppers.com.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WITH MEMORY FOAM

THE GREGORY BROTHERS

Blondie's Chris Stein and Debbie Harry talk to the new rulers of YouTube.

Between their in-studio greenscreen and recording booth, the YouTubers strike a pose.

I suppose it's entirely possible that there is someone out there who doesn't have a computer or a cell phone, who lives in a cabin or cave, and who hasn't encountered the Gregory Brothers and their contribution to contemporary culture. If you are one of these digitally uninitiated, go find help. Borrow a computer now, go to YouTube, and look up Michael Gregory's channel, which is called Schmoyoho, and watch/listen to their audiovisual tracks.

The Gregorys are the actual brothers Evan, Michael, and Andrew, and Evan's wife, Sarah. They are consummate musicians and cultural revolutionaries.

I'm not exactly sure when I first started seeing/hearing their offerings, but I definitely recall being fascinated by the case of Antoine Dodson and the surrounding viral hoopla. Antoine was a guy from Huntsville, Alabama, who wound up on a local news channel, WAFF/NBC, delivering a monologue about saving his sister Kelly from a home-invading rapist, "some idiot in the projects."

Something about Antoine's witty delivery and hooky street phraseology made the news clip an Internet sensation and the realization of Andy Warhol's iconic maxim that "in the future everyone will be world famous for 15 minutes." Enter the Gregory Brothers, who reached out to Antoine and did a musical remix of the news video called the "Bed Intruder Song." As of right now the original "Bed Intruder" stands at 130 million-plus views. It reached number 89 on the Billboard Hot 100 and became YouTube's most popular song of 2010.

Despite its being a weird novelty event, I always thought "Bed Intruder" was in fact a really great song, and so I kept following the Gregorys' endeavors. Several years later, Blondie was seeking material for a new recording cycle, and I figured, now is the time to get in touch with the Gregory Brothers.

Debbie; my wife, Barbara; and I met them, and eventually we went to their Williamsburg, Brooklyn, studio and shot an episode of "Songify the

Interview by CHRIS STEIN, DEBBIE HARRY, *and* BARBARA SICURANZA *Photographs by* CHRIS STEIN

News," a recurring program they do setting events culled from the ongoing televised political circus to their music. We wound up along with Joe Biden in a piece called "Naked Men" (only 600,000-some views so far) that dealt in part with Joe's discomfort talking to other politicians while naked at the Senate gym.

Here we are again at the Gregorys' Brooklyn loft studio, on a now rapidly gentrifying industrial street, to learn more about this unique group.

Chris Stein: What was your first entrance into the YouTube community? Do you date back to the video-responses period?
Andrew Gregory: I think everyone of our generation's first experience using YouTube was to make a comment on an Ali G video. "Man, this is a great video, but I can't help wanting to make a sarcastic comment."
Michael Gregory: We didn't at first realize there was a community of people doing this; we just put up videos and then found out later.
Evan Gregory: The video responses were a big part of people expressing "fanship" for our material and interacting with it.
Chris: Why did they put the kibosh on the video responses? Because of people piggybacking on the success of others?
Michael: Spam.
Andrew: We see the worst stuff on YouTube all the time; the trashiest stuff becomes funny if you see enough of it. There were channels out there that did nothing but reply videos to the most popular videos in an attempt to game the system by having the same video title.
Evan: As the site grew, the video-response system became more and more likely just to be used as spam rather than a real conversation between community members, so eventually YouTube dropped it.
Michael: There were a whole bunch of channels called the Reply Girl channels. It would be girls who would name the video the same as the original, but it would just be "my response" or "my reaction" to Kanye West taking the mic from Taylor Swift or whatever it was, and it would just be a girl with a ton of cleavage, almost like the camera wasn't centered on her face, so you just saw her mouth and cleavage.
Andrew: "I just have to respond to Justin Bieber's new video!"
Michael: I regret not making a Reply Girl channel; it was a huge missed opportunity for us.
Andrew: A year ago, there was a big trend in spam on YouTube that we thought was so funny. This is getting really meta, but it was people pretending to be nerds from Reddit making comments on videos referencing weird trends on Reddit. It surpassed spam and went to art territory. These people had to be working on it full-time, because they were doing it on so many videos, and then YouTube cracked down on it.
Evan: Here you had "artists," let's say, who were parodying spam...
Andrew: They were comment artists.
Evan: They were comment artists using the trappings of spam to make their parodies.
Chris: The impression among the masses is that because YouTube is accessible to everyone, it's somehow easy to break into.
Sarah Gregory: I feel lucky that we got in when we did. We were among the first wave of people to use YouTube as our primary forum. It's so saturated now, it's pretty hard.
Chris: What about monetizing this? Do you guys get any dough out of it?
Michael: That didn't even exist at the beginning—it would just be, "Oh, lots of people saw this video, so we get to write this jingle on the side." It was really our calling card.
Sarah: Even if you don't get paid for a gig when you're starting out, you're still pumped when 50 people show up. I didn't ever think we could make a living putting ourselves on YouTube.
Chris: Sarah, when did you hook up with Evan?
Sarah: I met all the guys within the same year.
Andrew: Michael's first summer living here, I had started a side hustle of picking up free furniture on Craigslist and then selling it on Craigslist.
Evan: Everyone aspires to get in that game.
Sarah: It wasn't as successful as his attempts to become a Reddit comments artist.
Andrew: It was sort of before the bedbug paranoia that swept New York City; it was easier to flip couches on Craigslist in 2006.
Evan: The YouTube channel we operate today is the one Michael started 10 years ago. Michael had put up a couple of music videos, also really fun. These are ways we can do music as a group when we're not in a minivan driving around—it's totally another way.
Chris: Was there one breakthrough moment?
Sarah: There were a lot of breakthrough moments. We were really lucky. It was a big deal when one of our videos got 40,000 views.
Chris: What was the first one?
Michael: It was called "Auto-Tune the News #2: pirates. drugs. gay marriage" [almost nine million views]. Rachel Maddow put it on her show, and that helped it get bigger. She gave us a huge boost.
Sarah: We have to give a lot of credit to Katie Couric, who was featured in that hook.
Michael: She was really cool about it. She was on Leno, and they showed it.
Sarah: And her voice was just gold.
Michael: She is one of the greatest accidental singers of all time. The R. Kelly of singing accidentally.
Chris: I really want to know if the double-rainbow guy was tripping.
Sarah: The "Double Rainbow" guy [36 million-plus views] is just one of the sweetest, most authentic souls you'll ever meet. He admits to being a user of drugs, but he was not using at that moment. It was just the power of the rainbow.
Andrew: The reason I believe he wasn't high then is because he readily admits in the video description on many of his other videos to being under the influence in them.
Evan: The other thing that makes him believable is that we've met him many times, we've hung out over the years and had him onstage with us, and to be in this guy's presence is to meet a man who is operating on a different plane. At any given moment he's communing with the world in the spiritual realm.
Evan: He lives on the top of a mountain.
Michael: In the same place where he shot that video. To hang out with Bear for a night is to witness everything as beautiful and magnificent, even if it's mundane. It's like living the double rainbow every day.
Chris: Maybe there's an analogy to Antoine Dodson there. In spite of the miserableness of the situation, Antoine was able to put this positive spin on his monologue, and that's what hooked everybody. Did you hang out with him?
Sarah: Antoine was noticeably different because he had called the news station to come and cover this attempted rape. They weren't getting the response they wanted from law enforcement, so they were like, "Let's make this a thing," and they made it a thing.
Chris: You got to meet Joe Biden.
Andrew: It was a dream come true.
Michael: I'd say he's the best male accidental singer.
Chris: Do you think Obama watches any of the videos?
Evan: It's hard to say. We know Joe Biden has seen a couple of our videos. So I think we can say with some degree of confidence that somebody has shown Obama something.
Sarah: I'd guess that his daughters did.
Andrew: When we met Biden, he had a really inspirational appearance where he was talking about how you don't need a handgun to defend your home, you just need a shotgun, and that's what he tells his wife to do ["Flying Robots—Songify the News #3," two and a half million-plus views]. It's really hilarious that he's telling his wife to shoot a shotgun off the balcony, 'cause she's, like, 4'11"—it seems like it would throw her backward. His staff said, when that song came out, "We couldn't stop listening to it."
Chris: Do you guys identify with the Marx Brothers?

"We see the worst stuff on YouTube all the time; the trashiest stuff becomes funny if you see enough of it."

Evan: Great question!
Chris: In my version, Michael is Harpo, Evan is Groucho, and Andrew is Chico.
Evan: What about Sarah? Is she Zeppo or Margaret Dumont?
Sarah: What about the other, the straight-man brother? Gummo?
Everyone: That's you!
Sarah: Oh, great!
Chris: She's the good-looking, normal one. We heard a story that the Marx Brothers went to meet some producer who kept them waiting, and he returned to his office to find them naked with a fire made out of all his furniture.
Evan: Once they were stars and on top of the world, they could do whatever they wanted.
Debbie Harry: They were well-hated by many people.
Andrew: They pranked too hard?
Debbie: There were pictures they wanted to do that got blocked by studio heads.
Chris: Do you think you guys could go mad with power?
Evan: We can only assume so...yes.
Sarah: I'd love to try.
Evan: Throughout history, the people who have been given power and stayed sane are a tiny minority.
Debbie: And you assume you all will remain sane?
Evan: I have to guess that we would screw it up.
Sarah: We would totally lose it.
Michael: Being sane is such a bore.
Chris: You are knocking out product on a regular basis.
Michael: We try to put out a video every month or anytime something really embarrassing happens.
Chris: What is your take on Trump?
Evan: Huge fans.
Michael: He's the best breakout accidental singer of 2015, no doubt. If there were a Grammy for that—and there isn't yet, but there probably will be by 2020—he would win.
Andrew: Our profession gives us some very strange incentives about who to root for. I remember the 2012 primaries, when Newt Gingrich won in South Carolina; we literally were celebrating.
Evan: Jumping for joy.
Andrew: Whooping and clapping! "Newt! Newt! We've got another two months of Newt!"
Evan: "He's staying in!"
Andrew: Which was not necessarily what I would have expected my political position to be. Obviously I was a Romney man.
Michael: Not a lot of people know this, but Gingrich was secretly in the first five "Auto-Tune the News." He was the very first person to sing in "Auto-Tune the News #1" [almost five million views]. Romney has this grumbly voice; he's only a good singer about 30 percent of the time. Gingrich is on point all the time. He's like Beyoncé.
Evan: That's the key to being a great accidental singer: You are already physically using your instrument akin to the way an intentional singer is using it.
Chris: Is the melody suggested by the rhythm of the speech?
Sarah: Ideally.
Michael: If Romney were to say, "I think poor kids can get by being janitors" in his grumbly, sixtysomething-year-old voice, it's not going to be a good melody. But Newt Gingrich, who's older than Romney, has just somehow used his voice really well.
Chris: He was Speaker of the House.
Michael: It reminds me of my voice teachers in college. Even my older voice teachers had preserved their voice so well. They'd sound like a 25-year-old. Newt Gingrich and Joe Biden have taken care of their voices so well, by supporting them on the breath, voice teachers would love them. So when Newt Gingrich says [high-pitched Gingrich imitation], "I think, even if a kid is poor, he can be a janitor and go to school..."
Sarah: There's this psychological component, especially with men—it has to do with the note they speak on. A lot of guys want to sound tougher, so they speak low down in their chest in a grumbly voice, and it makes them feel more macho. But a guy like Newt, God bless his pudgy little soul, is so confident, he doesn't care where his natural pitch lies.
Michael: That's real confidence; speaking high and not caring about it. And

Debbie Harry talks to the Brothers.

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that's also why women are better bets for accidental singers.

Chris: Was there any foreshadowing of your collaborations?

Evan: When we were in high school we would make our own comics, cutting up existing comics and reassembling them. That does somewhat correspond to what we are doing now in video.

Chris: William Burroughs would have been proud of you.

Andrew: It all started with a bad comic strip that we all really enjoyed ironically. It was about a high school coach/athletic director.

Evan: It was one of those dramatic comics.

Andrew: We challenged ourselves to make it funny by combining it with lines from other comics. Weirdly, I later became so obsessed with this one comic strip, *Gil Thorp,* that I began a correspondence with the author when it changed authors, and I couldn't tell if it had actually gotten good or if I had gone so deep into my ironic appreciation that I started liking it. He wound up naming a character after me. There's a character in *Gil Thorp* from the mid-2000s named after me.

Michael: What's the first line about you?

Andrew: "Don't look now, but it's my conceited ex-boyfriend!" There's an online forum for fans of the strip called The Bucket, which is the name of the restaurant all the high school players hang out in. One of the main complaints about the character Andrew Gregory is that for the entirety of his two years at Milford High School, he is always referred to by both names. Why is Andrew Gregory always "Andrew Gregory"? Jarvis White is just "Jarvis" and Ricky Sanchez is "Ricky."

Michael: We didn't do a lot of stuff together in the beginning, because there was a big age gap.

Andrew: Also, I would say that's the time in our lives when we got along with each other the least. Now we hang out together all the time. We're working together all the time. When we're not working, we get together and hang out. When I was 14 and Evan was 17, that's the worst we ever got along. When I was 17 and Michael was 14, that was the worst for us.

Barbara Sicuranza: Any other major influences in music or comedy, apart from the Marx Brothers?

Evan: When we were kids, we did listen to Smothers Brothers albums. There's the obvious thread of being brothers that had a stage act.

Michael: We love *Monty Python,* because it's so absurd. Newer comedy music we've been big fans of: Weird Al Yankovic, Tenacious D, Lonely Island; they're all examples of the way comedy music has gone. Now you need to sound really good, not just do a novelty parody and throw in a whistle. A song can exist on its own and sound like it's produced for the radio.

Andrew: Today there's much less fart folly. Although I recently went back and listened to Weird Al's "Fat," and there was a lot more fart folly than I remembered.

Evan: You've been thinking about it through rose-colored glasses.

Michael: We should use more fart folly.

Chris: Any Lenny Bruce? He was always intertwining politics with his comedy.

Andrew: Growing up, I don't think Lenny Bruce would have flown in our household. We weren't allowed to watch *The Simpsons* for a long time, which we wound up watching a ton of, and I'd say that's a pretty heavy comedic influence. We were lucky that we had a Russian exchange student who came and lived with our family, and what better to do with a foreign exchange student to teach him a language than sit him down and watch TV with him? If Vova wants to watch whatever he wants to watch, just let Vova watch it. Our parents were like, If this 18-year-old is in our house watching *The Simpsons,* we can't tell our 16-year-old and 13-year-old not to watch what Vova is watching. Then our parents realized this is a really funny, smart, harmless show.

Chris: Were your parents musically inclined?

Evan: They're great musicians; they are not professional musicians. They're both teachers. They're both really strong singers. They both play the piano. Dad plays the guitar. Music was around quite a bit.

Chris: Sarah, did you have a similar conservative upbringing?

Sarah: Yeah, I did, actually. *The Simpsons* wasn't allowed in our household, either. I watched it at friends' houses.

Chris: Do you think Donald Trump is going to win?

Andrew: It's his to lose.

Michael: I didn't know there was any question about it. I just assumed everyone had already accepted Trump as Lord and Savior. I'm just looking forward to him redrafting the Constitution into a weird Old Testament–Constitution hybrid—that's already been happening. I feel like we're already moving toward that hybrid. Like, why even separate them when people combine them so much?

Andrew: Right, just back to the true intentions of our founding fathers.

Sarah: Make America great again!

Evan: I can't wait to be great again.

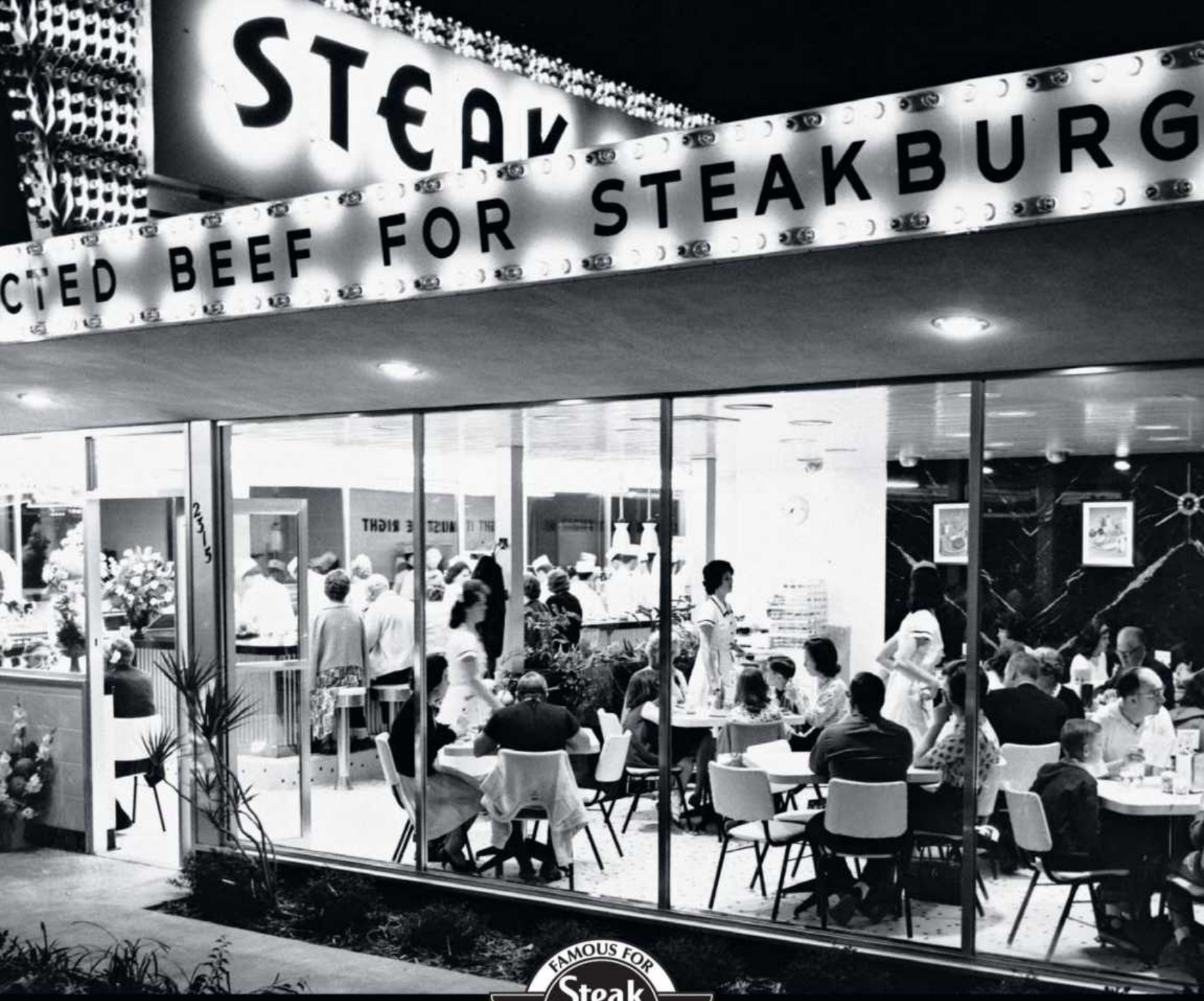
Michael: One thing I really appreciate from [Ben] Carson, another outsider, is that he's helped us break this stereotype of brain surgeons having to be smart. That was a real obstacle for people before. They didn't think they could be a doctor, but now we know.

Andrew: All rocket scientists are now thinking, "Guys, nobody run for office and screw this up for us." They won't be using "brain surgery" anymore. We're gonna have the smart market cornered with "rocket science."

Andrew: The next thing you know the CEO of Boeing is going to run for office and screw it up for all of 'em.

Cultural criticism on Keap Street in Brooklyn near the Gregory Brothers' studio. Styling, N.A.P. *Hair and makeup,* Clelia Bergonzoli for MAC at Utopia

"A lot of guys want to sound tougher, so they speak low down in their chest in a grumbly voice, and it makes them feel more macho."



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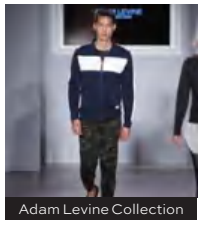
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Maxim and Bloomingdale's teamed up once again to celebrate Bloomingdale's Men's Designer Event in Aventura, Florida. Guests were treated to beats by DJ YSL and a live intimate musical performance by COIN. After playing their hit song "Run," Joe, Zach, Ryan and Chase mingled and signed autographs for their fans and shoppers.

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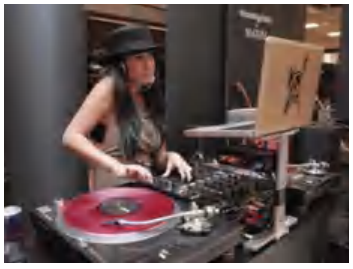

GENTLEMAN'S SPY CLOSET

If there's anything we learned from the film Kingsman, *it's the importance of a well-outfitted spy closet. Go undercover in style with these essentials.*

Photographed by MARK PLATT
Styled by ANDREW PORTER

Coats 1. MACKINTOSH, 2. CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION, 3. SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, 4. ZEGNA, 5. PAUL SMITH. *Shirt* 6. ZEGNA. *Glasses* 7. and 8. OLIVER PEOPLES, 9. TOM FORD. *Passport cover* 10. RIMOWA. *Umbrella* 11. SWAINE ADENEY BRIGG. *Cologne* 12. TOM FORD. *Cigar case* 13. DAVIDOFF. *Cigar cutter* 14. S.T. DUPONT. *Lighter* 15. S.T. DUPONT. *Bag* 16. BOTTEGA VENETA. *Gun* 17. COLT. *Shoes* 18. SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, 19. and 20. GEORGE CLEVERLEY.

The secret spy-gadget closet from Kingsman: The Secret Service.

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Avengers *star Patrick Macnee*

GENTLEMEN SPIES ROLL CALL SIDNEY REILLY Russian-born and recruited by the English, Reilly was given bricks of cash for bribes and a fat salary that indulged his appetite for women. DUSKO POPOV This wealthy Serbian, a double agent for Britain during World War II, enjoyed a lavish lifestyle in between and sometimes during his missions. MALKO LINGE The creation of Gerard de Villiers, Linge is a Harvard-educated Austrian prince and agent for the CIA. Linge lives in a castle, dates a baroness, and has his handmade suits tailored to accommodate a discreet, lightweight handgun. MATT HELM The protagonist in Donald Hamilton's spy novel series *Matt Helm* was played by Dean Martin on the screen. Upbeat and easy-going, Helm is less interested in danger than in the company of sexy ladies. JOHN STEED The Eton-educated Steed, portrayed in the TV series *The Avengers* (played by Patrick Macnee, left), is best remembered for his signature accessories: a bowler (metal-plated to repel bullets) and an umbrella (which concealed a sword, disguised surveillance equipment, and could store a cache of whiskey).

This spread: *Coat* 1. MACKINTOSH. *Guns* 2. WALTHER, 3. COLT. *Camera* 4. PANASONIC. *Binoculars* 5. LEICA. *Pens* 6. MONT BLANC. *Dagger* 7. COLD STEEL. *Throwing stars* 8. COLD STEEL. *Card case* 9. ETTINGER. *Grooming kit* 10. RIMOWA. *Knife* 11. COLD STEEL. *Tie bars* 12. TOM FORD, 13. MONT BLANC. *Driving gloves* 14. AUTODROMO. *Knives* 15. SCHRADE. *Briefcase* 16. BOTTEGA VENETA. *Jacket* 17. TOM FORD. *Cufflinks* 18. THOMAS PINK, 19. and 20. DUNHILL, 21. ETTINGER, 22. DUNHILL, 23. MONT BLANC, 24. DUNHILL, 25. ETTINGER, 26. THOMAS PINK. *Sunglasses* 27. RALPH LAUREN, 28. BOTTEGA VENETA, 29. RALPH LAUREN, 30. TOM FORD, 31. OLIVER PEOPLES. *Watches* 32. and 33. OMEGA, 34. SEIKO, 35. BELL & ROSS, 36. OMEGA, 37. SAMSUNG. *Watches* 38. OMEGA, 39. TAG HEUER, 40. SUUNTO. *Wallet* 41. DUNHILL. *Flask* 42. J.W. HULME. *Pocket watch chain* 43. TOM FORD. *Umbrella* 44. ZEGNA. *Driving gloves* 45. AUTODROMO. *Baton* 46. SCHRADE. *Ties* 47. THOMAS PINK, 48. and 49. CALVIN KLEIN, 50. THOMAS PINK, 51. CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION, 52. BOTTEGA VENETA. *Shoes* 53. SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, 54. GEORGE CLEVERLEY, 55. BALLY.

Silk scarf 1. BOTTEGA VENETA. *Sunglasses* 2. OLIVER PEOPLES, 3. BOTTEGA VENETA, 4. AUTODROMO, 5. OLIVER PEOPLES. *Bow ties* 6. and 7. BALLY, 8. BRIONI. *Flask* 9. J.W. HULME. *Backpack* 10. LOUIS VUITTON. *Ties* 11. TOM FORD. *Cigar case* 12. GHURKA. *Folding knives* 13. COLD STEEL. *Handgun* 14. SIG SAUER. *Sword cane* 15. COLD STEEL. *Coat* 16. BRIONI. *Shirts* 17. TOM FORD, 18. THOMAS PINK. *Bag* 19. BOTTEGA VENETA. *Belts* 20. PAUL SMITH. *Shoes* 21. GEORGE CLEVERLEY, 22. SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.

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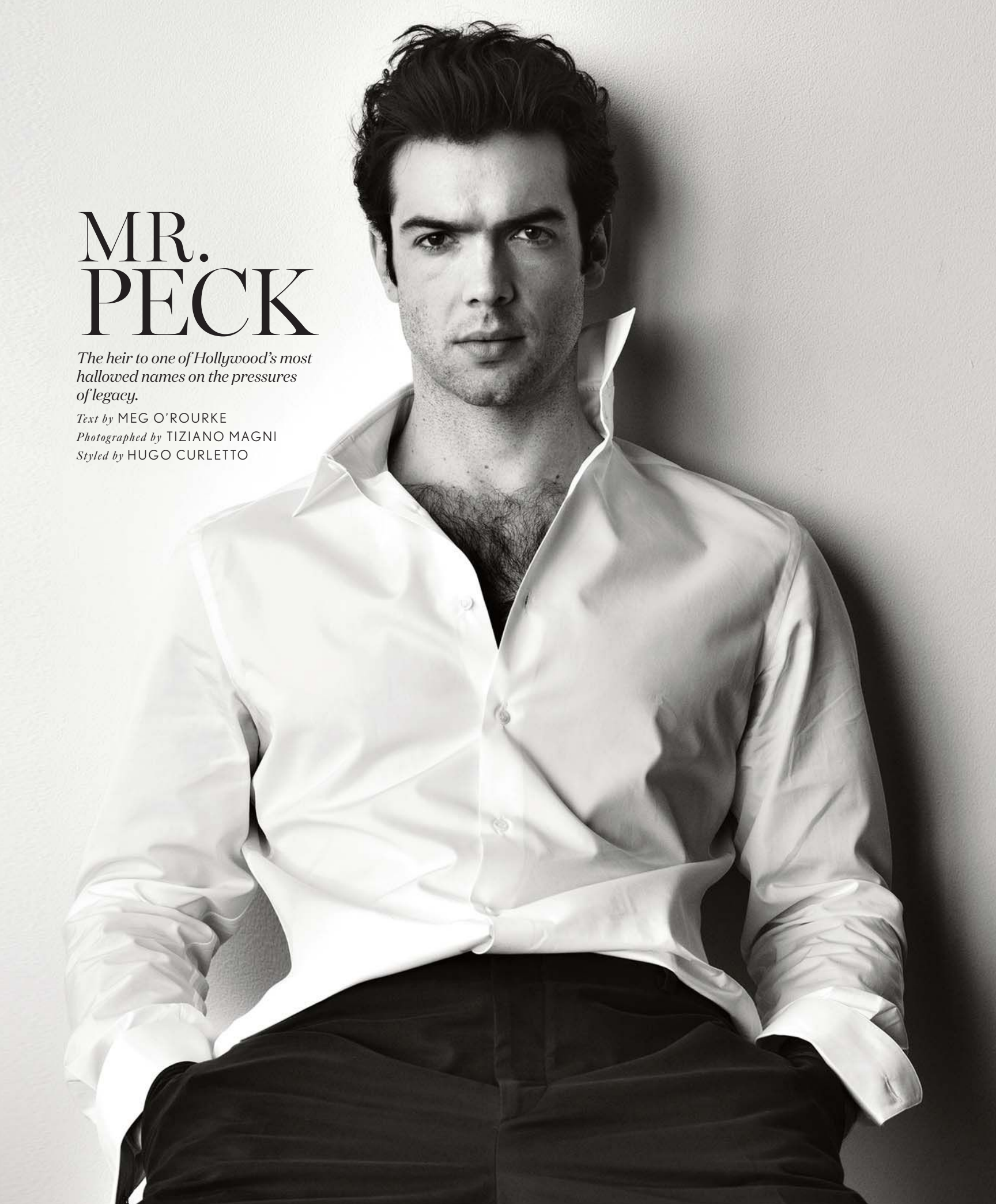


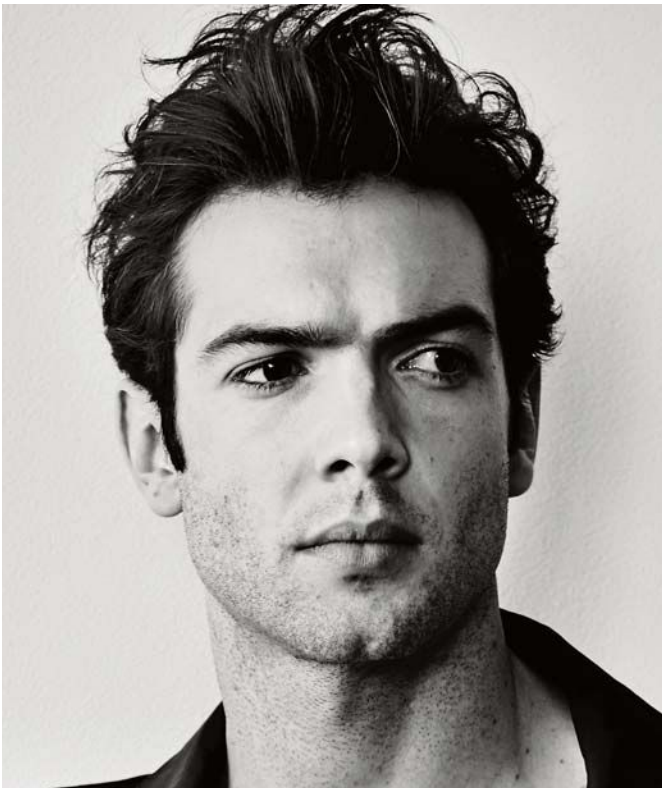
MR. PECK

The heir to one of Hollywood's most hallowed names on the pressures of legacy.

Text by MEG O'ROURKE
Photographed by TIZIANO MAGNI
Styled by HUGO CURLETTO

Ethan Peck, the 29-year-old actor and grandson of Gregory Peck, has inherited more than his grandfather's expressive brown eyes. Peck, who grew up in L.A. with divorced parents, has been acting since he was nine. "Familial complications" prevented him from getting close to his grandfather before his death. And though he descends from Hollywood royalty, Peck carries himself with the modest demeanor of someone being exposed to the lights and cameras for the first time.

Do you think some of the qualities that have been ascribed to Gregory Peck—modesty, moral courage, and intellectual curiosity—have been passed down to you?
I love the perception of him as a man. He's this classic gentleman. My father has that. I think I learned that from him, which was given to him by my grandfather. People think my grandfather is wonderful and amazing. They would think the same of my father. Someone asked, "Does it feel like a weight or like a burden?" I don't feel like that at all, because there's also a distance. I don't do this because of him, as hard as that might be to believe.



Gregory Peck, Ethan's grandfather.

Do you lose yourself in front of the camera? How far will you let yourself go psychologically?
I'm still experimenting. I played the role of Andreas in a film called *Eden.* He did some horrible things. I thought maybe the best way in would be to expose myself to those experiences, but I found it to be very traumatic. You don't think about how delicate the psyche is. I think there were parts of it that worked, and there was also resistance—it's a survival instinct.

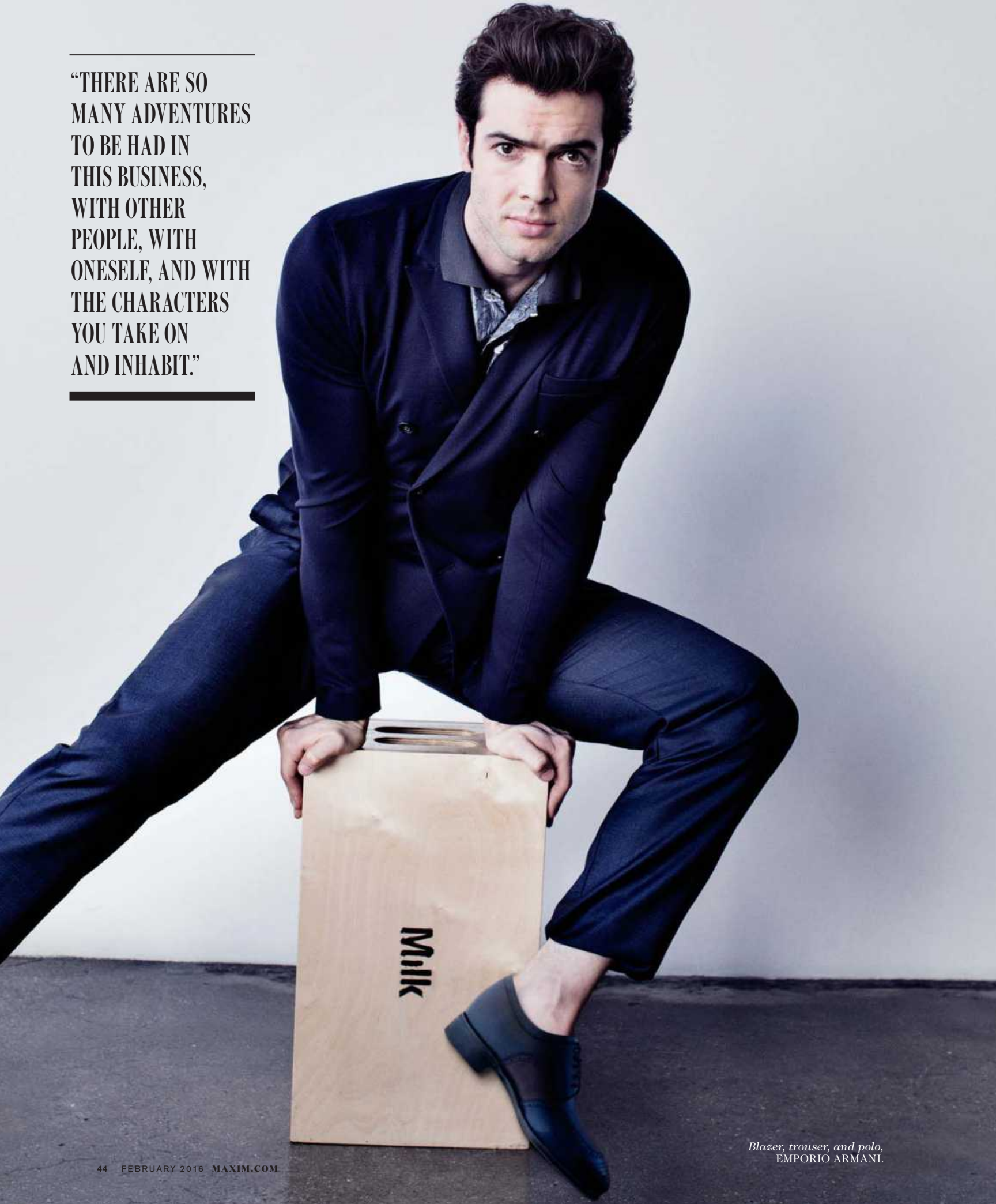
Your grandfather said he reached out to the audience to make friends with them and to tell them a story he wanted to tell. Does acting make you feel connected to other people, or is it more solitary?
That's a complicated question. It's both. I find it to be more solitary, because the preparation I've endured has been alone and very isolating. Yet there's got to be an awareness for what's around you and also a deep introspection and rearranging of who you are and what's important to you at any given moment, depending on who you're playing.

What drives you? Success? Love of the work?
My curiosity drives me. There are so many adventures to be had in this business, with other people, with oneself, and with the characters you take on and inhabit. Just to see how far you can go, how much you can take in, how much story you can hold of your own life and of others. I think of it more as opening myself up to experiences. I don't mean just as an actor. I mean as a person.

Favorite film of your grandfather's?
How could I not love *To Kill a Mockingbird*? It's so special. The beginning, with Scout drawing and humming—it's gorgeous. Also, I saw *Spellbound* for the first time recently—it was wild.

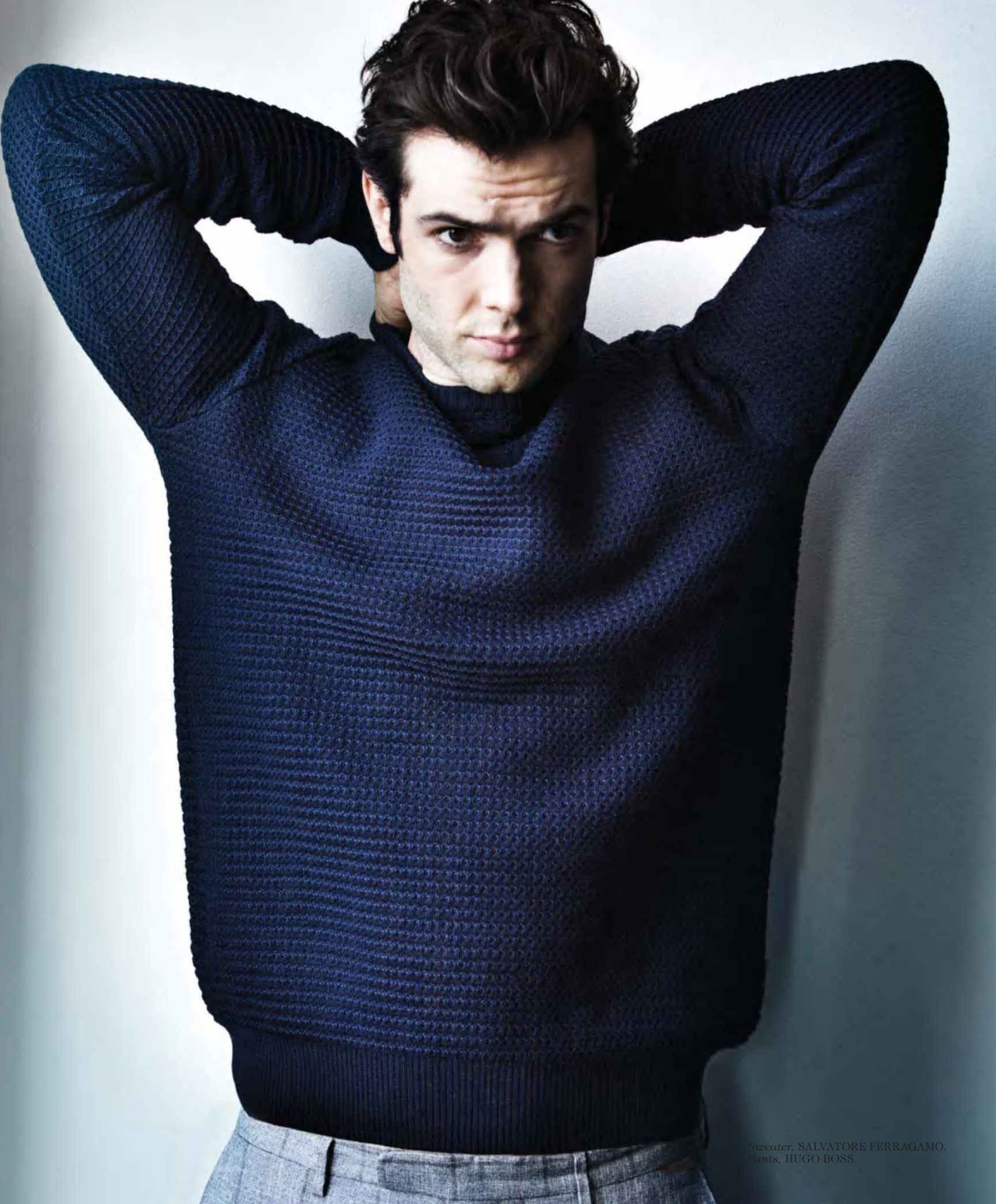
When it comes to women, are you a casual or formal suitor? Perfect first date?
I'm not too casual. I would consider myself to be on the more sensitive end of the spectrum. That lends itself to someone who wants a little more experiential substance. For a first date, being in an environment that provides a lot of sensations, either visually or audibly, going to a park or a festival or a carnival. I really love a talking date. It'd be nice to get a sense of whomever she is, what kind of mind she has, and what interests her.

Opposite page: *Shirt and pants,* SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.



"THERE ARE SO MANY ADVENTURES TO BE HAD IN THIS BUSINESS, WITH OTHER PEOPLE, WITH ONESELF, AND WITH THE CHARACTERS YOU TAKE ON AND INHABIT."

Blazer, trouser, and polo, EMPORIO ARMANI.



Sweater, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.
Pants, HUGO BOSS.

Watch, OMEGA.
Suit, MICHAEL KORS.
Sweater and sunglasses,
SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.

Suit and tank, CALVIN KLEIN.
Pocket square, stylist's own.
Opposite page:
Suit, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.
Tank, CALVIN KLEIN.

Grooming, Jessica Ortiz for Moroceanoil at the Wall Group.

For more information, see page 94.

WHAT LEADING MEN WEAR

Massimiliano Giornetti, creative director for the House of Ferragamo, discusses classic elegance and lasting qualities in men's fashion.

Text by MEG O'ROURKE

Salvatore Ferragamo was a creative genius whose success was the product of a deep, quasi-mystical understanding of his purpose. Born poor in rural Italy into a family of 14 children, he was a fully trained cobbler by the age of 13. He launched himself professionally stateside in California, designing footwear for the studios and its actors, and his long roster of Hollywood A-list clients over the next decades included Douglas Fairbanks, Greta Garbo, Audrey Hepburn, Gregory Peck, Sophia Loren, and Marilyn Monroe. His anatomical studies and passionate desire to heal pained feet led him to create shoes that married design and wearability. Ferragamo claimed, "I do not have to search for styles. When I need new ones I select from those that present themselves to my mind as I select an apple from the laden dish upon my table." His creations have been exhibited in museums and influenced countless designers, yet Ferragamo founded his fortune on the comfort of his clients. After his death, in 1960, his widow and children carried on with the company, introducing accessories and ready-to-wear. One hundred years after Salvatore opened his first shop, the Italian luxury brand now has hundreds of stores around the globe and employs several thousand people. One of those is Massimiliano Giornetti, who joined Ferragamo in 2000 and in 2010 became creative director for the entire label, the first person ever to hold the position at the company. Ferragamo is now one of the oldest luxury fashion brands in the business. The company has expanded its reach to become a major global presence, retailing around the world. To Ferragamo, luxury is synonymous with quality craftsmanship—manufacturing remains exclusively in Italy. Below, Giornetti talks about his creative understanding of Ferragamo's history, the meaning of style, and the inspirations behind his collections.

Salvatore Ferragamo, 1956.

In focusing the vision of a house with so much history, you have chosen to keep the polished tailoring of the brand very much intact. Is there an archive of former designs, and if so, are you interpreting from earlier pieces? Or has your distillation been purely visual?

People think of the word "archive" and see a library of history. Our archive, though, is alive and fluid. It's a home where Salvatore Ferragamo's original designs and concepts commingle and inspire my own vision—a perfect balance between comfort and creativity. I want my creations to be modern but also user-friendly. This is completely in line with Ferragamo's heritage—Salvatore was a genius, an artist. He had an unusual, highly personal feel for color that worked well with the spirit of experimentation with which he approached every project for a new shoe. Salvatore spent years studying anatomy so that the wearability of his creations would always be guaranteed and never subordinated to the shoe's pure aesthetic value. This was an avant-garde philosophy, in which beauty was the result of a subtle negotiation between form and function.

Do you think men should dress in suits most of the time, and always to work?

There is some truth in the saying "Clothes make the man," since they're a tool to communicate your personality. As for suits, of course, wear according to your needs and occasion.

You've said that when you're designing a collection, you think of a character and then portray him from the ground up. Who is the character in your most recent collection?

An eclectic man who mixes his many interests, inspirations, and ideas. I imagined a globetrotter who loves different cultures and colors, and freely transmits his aesthetic experience through his personalized outfits. He wears the 'everyday' with individuality and purposely misaligned precision-cropped suits with colorful shirts and sharp graphic prints. He is not ec-

PORTRAIT OF MASSIMILIANO GIORNETTI: VANMOSSEVELDE+N/MANAGEMENT+ARTISTS+SYNDICATION. ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF FERRAGAMO

Massimiliano Giornetti wears head-to-toe custom Ferragamo.

centric but he has a touch of irony. Cactuses and monkeys whimsically adorn patches and embroidery. The overall aesthetic of the collection is the result of the instinctive combination of several factors, like a collage, to emphasize a carefree attitude.

Do you think clients worldwide are drawn to an idea about a lifestyle, even if subliminally, as much as they are to the clothes themselves?
I wish to communicate a lifestyle, an Italian lifestyle, that reflects the joy of life, based on the continuous search for beauty, harmony, and quality. A rhythm of living and enjoying small luxuries and habits that can transform your everyday life into something special. Savoir faire of manual work, expertise. Finding the time that is required to create and fully enjoy the small masterpieces that represent our collections. A lifestyle that reflects our history and tradition but also a spirit of innovation and challenge, of art and science.

Let's say a man is young and building his career, and doesn't have a lot of extra money to spend on clothes. Do you believe in the "Buy one, buy good" philosophy, investing in a few quality suits that will last and distinguish him? In his case, how many suits should he aspire to have in his closet?
I believe in quality and investing in craftsmanship; it's a very modern way of investing money. His wardrobe should build on a strong foundation and grow with precision. For sure a navy, perfectly tailored blazer, a white made-to-measure shirt, a beautiful cashmere sweater, a business suit, gray or blue, and a tuxedo. And, of course, a pair of handcrafted Ferragamo shoes.

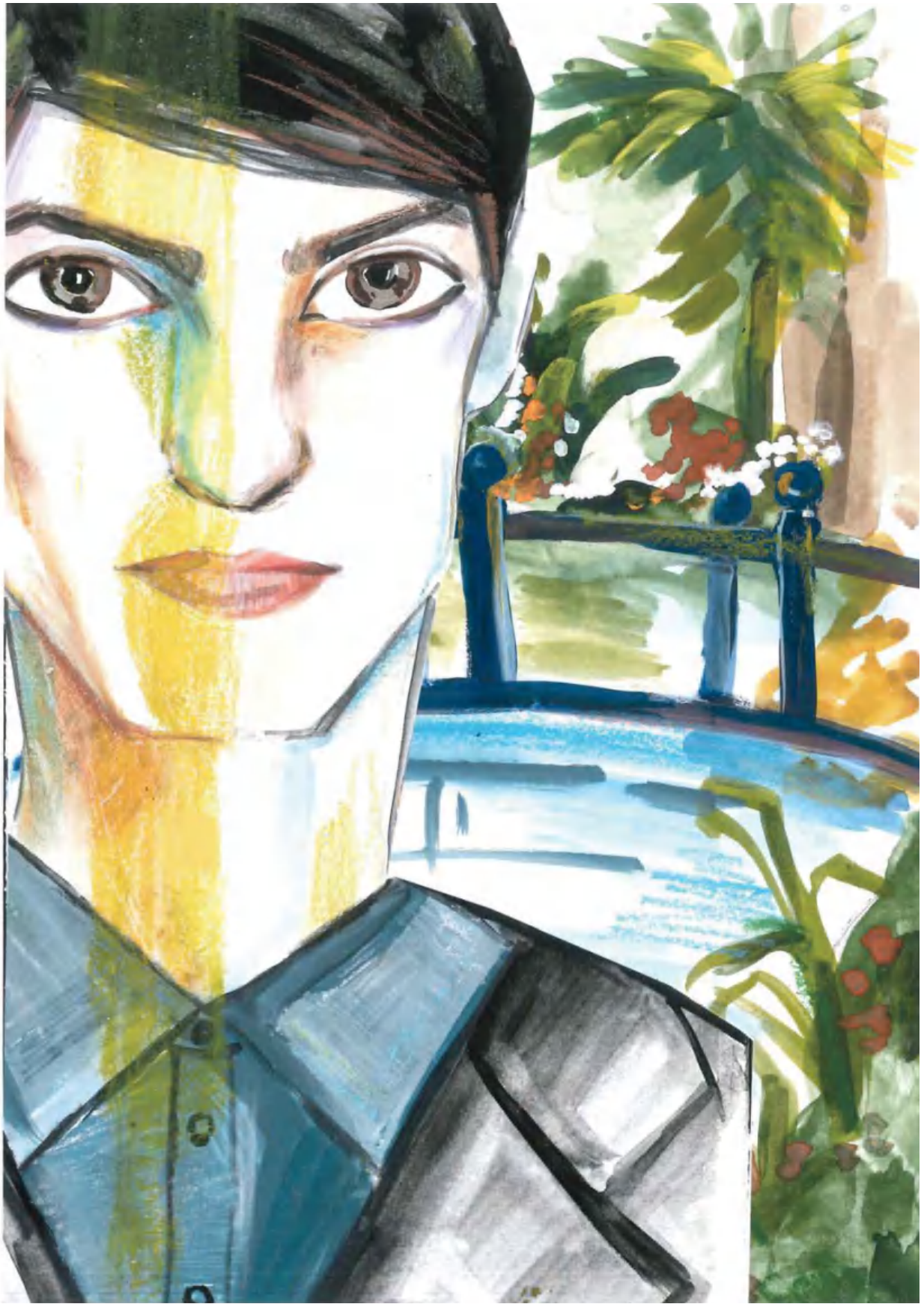
In one interview, you mention Gianni Agnelli as a style icon—saying that his style wasn't purely sartorial but had to do with his whole attitude. How would you describe that attitude, and is it reflected in your designs for men?
Gianni Agnelli was a man of an undisputed elegance. Maybe the most elegant man of his time. But the point is that he had such a strong personality that he could also change the dogmas of elegance, like wearing white socks with handmade shoes or his watch above his shirt cuff. Anyone should adapt fashion to his own taste and personality, reinterpreting it. This is certainly always at the core of the man I design for, where a certain lifestyle is beyond his wardrobe.

People tend to associate glamour with women or with places. Can a man be glamorous, and have you tried to achieve that in the way you dress them?
Glamour describes the lifestyle of this man, not his outfit. Yet he plays his part in this glamorous role with impeccable tailoring complemented by bespoke style, exploring dichotomy as he plays with the rules of fashion.

Ferragamo training an apprentice.

"Anyone should adapt fashion to his own taste and personality, reinterpreting it. This is certainly always at the core of the man I design for, where a certain lifestyle is beyond his wardrobe."

Top and bottom: *Looks from the spring/summer 2016 collection.* Middle, from left: *A shoe created for Andy Warhol; a bag designed by Ferragamo in 1949.*



One of Giornetti's sketches for the spring/summer 2016 collection.

VEGAS BABY

Swedish siren Elsa Hosk on what it takes to be an Angel.

Photographed by SANTE D'ORAZIO *Styled by* ISABEL DUPRÉ

Fur coat, POLOGEORGIS.
Bodice, DSQUARED2.
Thong, VICTORIA'S SECRET.
Shoes, GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI.
Titus Villa at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.

Cape, NAEEM KHAN. *Bodysuit,* VICTORIA'S SECRET. *Necklace,* ERICKSON BEAMON. *Bracelets,* MITCHEL PRIMROSE. *Shoes,* DSQUARED2. *Garden of the Gods at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.*

Fur coat, ADRIENNE LANDAU.
Necklace, ERICKSON BEAMON.
Bracelets, R.J. GRAZIANO.
Garden of the Gods at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.

Shirt, TOM FORD. *Bra, garter, and thong,* VICTORIA'S SECRET. *Necklace,* SWAROVSKI. *Hosiery,* FALKE. *Titus Villa at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.* Opposite page: *Replica of the* Winged Victory of Samothrace *statue at the Caesars Palace Las Vegas fountains.*

MAXIM Magazine interviews February's cover girl. The athletic training of Elsa Hosk, a former pro basketball player in Sweden, is apparent when she is in front of the camera: the intense focus, the commanding way her body performs, the transcendent magic of being fully in the moment. Hosk is warm and exuberant, an adventurous free spirit with a high level of physical prowess and discipline. She knows what it's like to be knocked down and get back up again—and the knocks have only made her stronger. She thinks like a warrior and looks like a Nordic angel. She is, undeniably, a force.

You were born in Sweden. What was it like to grow up in a country that is mostly dark many months of the year?
Growing up like that, you don't know anything different, so I guess you get used to it as a kid. It's pretty intense now when I go back to Sweden after living in New York for seven years. The winters are so dark, you get to work in the dark and leave work in the dark—it can get pretty depressing. But on the other side of that, we have these beautiful summers where the light stays all day and all night. Swedish people live for the summer—it transforms everyone. I don't want to miss having a Swedish summer vacation for as long as I live. It's my favorite thing in the world.

What are your best childhood memories?
Being done with school in the summer. Flying out of the classroom, knowing you have three months of freedom ahead of you. Going out to the archipelago in my family's old boat, then living on this little island called Utö for the rest of the summer. Chasing after my older brother and smelling my mom's fresh baked cinnamon buns...*aah*!

You've said, addressing women in Fair Girls, the organization you support, that you were broken once. What did it take for you to become whole and brave?
We all go through tough times in our lives at some point. I can relate to these girls and the questions they are asking themselves. I was lucky to find support and to have good people around me, helping to make me strong when I was asking myself, "Who am I?" Women deal with so much insecurity, fear, and pressure. Finding good people in our lives who love us for the right reasons is so important. Remembering to address our own character defects, and working on them to make ourselves better, stronger, and more powerful. Time heals everything, one day at a time.

You played professional basketball for two years, and you've said the intensity of the daily practices prepared you for your modeling career. Can you describe your mind-set before a game?
I'm so pumped before a game. I love the adrenaline. My brain is competitive. I get myself to a point where I feel like I'm going to explode! It's so much fun. I can't really explain it. I think I've always been like that. Playing sports is great when you're young. It teaches you how to focus, how to direct your energy, how not to think about a million other things that are going on. I've been learning to box for the past three years. If you're not 100 percent in the moment, you can be knocked out. There's no time for hanging out in the brain thinking about stuff. You have to react from instinct.

How about the frame of mind you're in before modeling in a Victoria's Secret show?
I prepare for it mentally. It's a crazy amazing day. I try to meditate a little extra before the show so I can be in the moment and enjoy everything that's happening. I also prepare physically. Starting about two months before the show, I double my workouts and think more about what I eat. When you know millions of people are going to be watching you in your lingerie, you want to be as ready as you can be.

Are you comfortable being naked?
[*laughing*] This is a funny question, because in fact, I am! Maybe it's a Swedish thing. I mean, isn't everyone more comfortable naked, without clothes pulling and twisting and weighing on you?

When did you learn English? You speak it perfectly.
In Sweden, we learn English in school. But I've also traveled since I was 13, and forced myself to get comfortable with English. Now that I've lived in NYC for so long, it comes to me more easily than Swedish, which I absolutely hate!

How do you say *sexy* in Swedish?
Sexig.

What are the most seductive qualities a man can have?
Humor, kindness, confidence, and being nonjudgmental.

What are your aspirations for the future?
Being a Victoria's Secret Angel is amazing and has opened a lot of doors. I want to continue on this path. I'm also launching a clothing line called Lola Rebella with my designer friend Johanna Dauphin. It's vintage-inspired and will be released this year. Superexcited about that!

Jumpsuit, NAEEM KHAN. *Mask,* ERICKSON BEAMON. *Bracelet,* MITCHEL PRIMROSE. *Surrender Nightclub at Encore in Wynn Las Vegas.*
Opposite page: *Dress,* ALON LIVNE. *Bracelet,* MITCHEL PRIMROSE. *Shoes,* TOM FORD. *Three-bedroom duplex at Encore in Wynn Las Vegas.*

Fur coat, DENNIS BASSO.
Bodysuit, VICTORIA'S SECRET.
Necklace and bracelets, R.J. GRAZIANO.
Titus Villa at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.

Dress, ALEXANDRE VAUTHIER.
XS nightclub at Encore in Wynn Las Vegas.

Fur coat, DENNIS BASSO.
Shorts, VERA WANG. *Bracelets,* R.J. GRAZIANO.
Shoes, GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI. *Hosiery,* FALKE.
Outside XS nightclub at Encore in Wynn Las Vegas.

Dress, MARCHESA.
Shoes, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN.
Titus Villa at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.

Fur coat, DENNIS BASSO.
Necklace and bracelets, R.J. GRAZIANO.
Outside XS nightclub at Encore in Wynn Las Vegas.
Opposite page: *Dress,* BILL BLASS.
Bracelet, R.J. GRAZIANO. *Shoes,* TOM FORD.
Titus Villa at Caesars Palace Las Vegas.

Assistant styling, Caroline Ward.
Makeup, Fabiola at Tracey Mattingly using Make Up For Ever.
Hair, Serena Radaelli using Kérastase Paris Elixir Ultime Volume Beautifying Oil Mist.

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SIN CITY

Curated by JACQUELINE MIRÓ

THE MEN WHO MADE VEGAS

Much like Rome, Las Vegas wasn't built in a day.

Text by JACK SHEEHAN

Unlike the gamblers who seeded its meteoric rise, Las Vegas has overcome the odds consistently for 70 years. Once an outpost in the desert controlled by organized crime—rumored to have removed truckloads of uncounted cash from casinos in the still of the night—today an acre of the four-mile-long Strip is worth $10 million. Tourism numbers are at all-time highs.

The roll call of men who built Las Vegas dates back to the 1940s and '50s, when shady characters like Meyer Lansky, Moe Dalitz, and Benny Binion became infatuated with the possibilities of settling in the only legal gambling center in the country and developing a seedy adult getaway. In the 1960s, it was billionaire Howard Hughes and banker E. Parry Thomas who made things happen. Then visionaries Michael Milken, Kirk Kerkorian, and Steve Wynn raised the bar again in the 1970s. These men, who make up an A-list of gaming leaders, were as diverse and colorful as the gambling palaces they built and managed. Following are some of the extraordinary circumstances that allowed a dusty outpost in the middle of nowhere to become one of the brightest spots on Earth. It is by any measure remarkable that just 70 years after hotels were first constructed there, the city is considered one of the top tourist destinations in the world, and home to 614,000 residents who lead remarkably normal lives.

If Disneyland was built as a place of adventure and escape for kids, it's only logical that somewhere in America there would be a special place where adults could have their fun without the stories following them home.

Maybe that's why Las Vegas emerged in the middle of a desert.

Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel

While the story of the Las Vegas Strip's creation is as sexy and shadowy as a Raymond Chandler mystery, modern Las Vegas did not grow merely out of fortunes amassed from the turn of a card or a roll of the dice. The construction of the Hoover Dam between 1931 and 1935 and the outbreak of World War II were essential to its growth. Preceded by a few watering holes and casinos in downtown Las Vegas in the '30s and '40s, the Flamingo Hotel, which opened in 1946, gave birth to what we now know as the Strip and was home to both mafia boss Meyer Lansky and on-site operator Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel. It is said that sharp gamblers took so much money off the gaming tables on opening weekend that the hotel had to shut down for three months before reopening. Just three months later, Bugsy was murdered in his girlfriend's Beverly Hills home, making way for other lieutenants in the Lansky crime family to sweep into Las Vegas and take over management of the hotel. Thus began a 25-year stretch in which most of the new resorts built along the Las Vegas Strip had disguised ownership by members of organized crime.

Howard Hughes and E. Parry Thomas

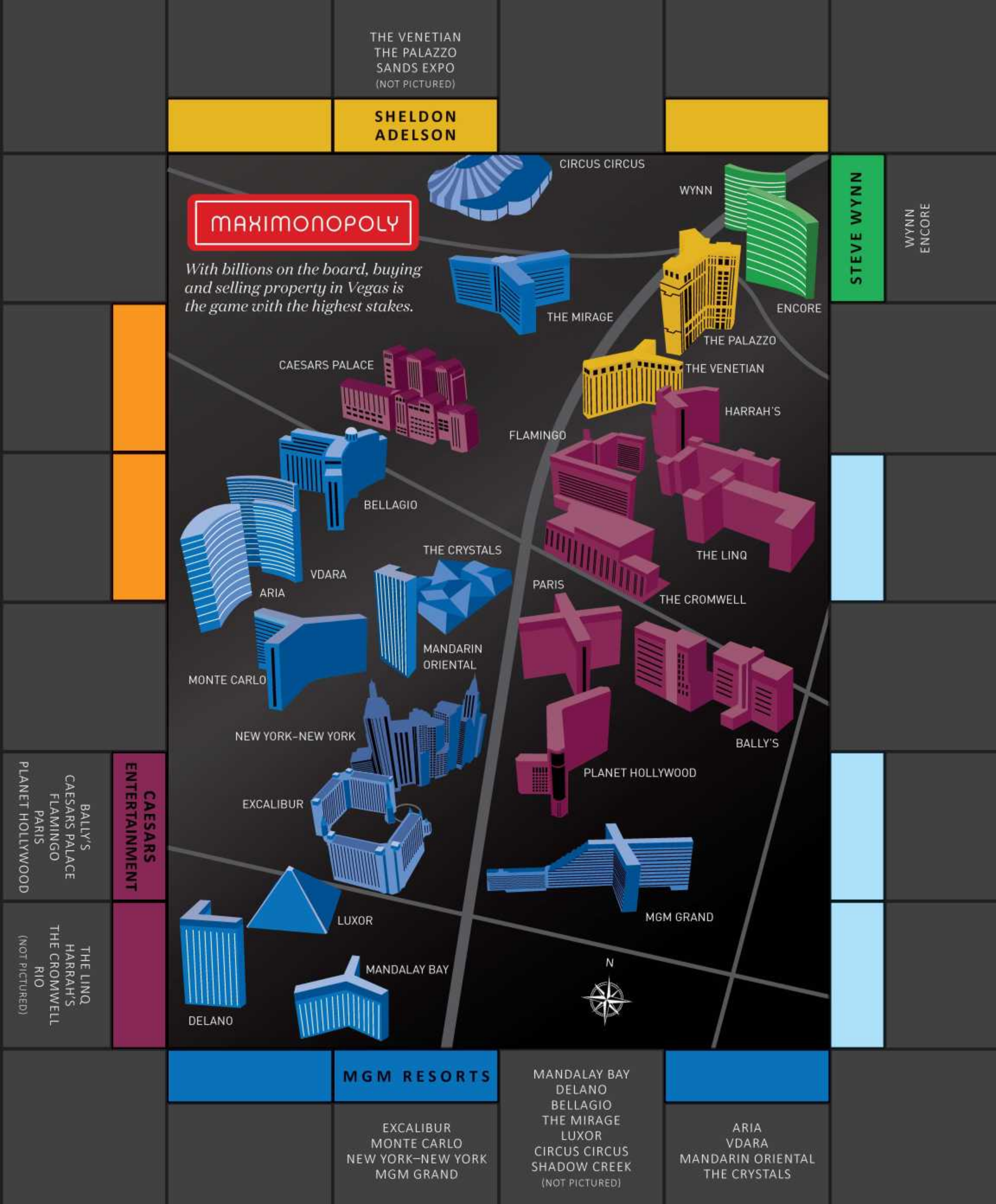
No event throughout the 1960s had more impact on the future of Las Vegas than the arrival of Howard Hughes on Thanksgiving weekend 1966. Originally intending to stay just three weeks in the city he had frequented as a bachelor years before, Hughes settled into the recently remodeled ninth floor of Moe Dalitz's Desert Inn, with a full security staff occupying that floor and the one below. The billionaire soon found that he was very comfortable there and refused to move out over the Christmas holidays to make room for the inn's high-rolling gamblers. Dalitz was irate and threatened to have him physically evicted. Banker E. Parry Thomas advised Hughes that the only way he would be able to remain at the Desert Inn was to purchase the hotel and proceeded to cast his wide net of influence, finally convincing Dalitz to sell to Hughes. The transaction was completed in June 1967, and once the billionaire realized there were tax incentives to putting his vast savings into active investments, he encouraged Thomas to "play Monopoly" and buy up several other hotels on the Strip. Over the next two years, Hughes added the Sands, the Frontier, the Silver Slipper, the Castaways, and the Landmark to his portfolio.

Although Hughes quietly ended his seclusion in Las Vegas in 1970, departing four years to the day after his arrival, and never built a single thing while he was there, his symbolic impact on the city was immense. His acquisitions signaled to the outside world that if an entrepreneur of his stature and mystique was willing to pour that much money into the hotel-casino business, perhaps there was some legitimacy to the town and the gambling industry.

Kirk Kerkorian

While Hughes was still ensconced at the Desert Inn, his friend Kirk Kerkorian also had big plans for Las Vegas. Kerkorian had purchased 80 acres on the Strip in 1962 for just under a million dollars and had leased it to developer Jay Sarno to build Caesars Palace. Kerkorian then sold the land outright to Caesars for $9 million in 1968. One year later, Kerkorian opened the International Hotel on Paradise Road, at the time the largest hotel in the world, with almost 1,600 rooms. To fill his massive, 1,600-seat showroom, he brought in two of the biggest names in entertainment: Elvis Presley and, later, Barbra Streisand. Presley would go on to become the hottest ticket in Las Vegas until his death in 1977. He not only sold out the showroom every night but also packed the casino with high-rolling gamblers.

PREVIOUS PAGE: © CULTURA RM/ALAMY


THE VENETIAN
THE PALAZZO
SANDS EXPO
(NOT PICTURED)
SHELDON ADELSON
MAXIMONOPOLY
With billions on the board, buying and selling property in Vegas is the game with the highest stakes.
CIRCUS CIRCUS
WYNN
STEVE WYNN
WYNN
ENCORE
THE MIRAGE
ENCORE
THE PALAZZO
THE VENETIAN
CAESARS PALACE
HARRAH'S
FLAMINGO
BELLAGIO
THE CRYSTALS
THE LINQ
VDARA
ARIA
PARIS
THE CROMWELL
MANDARIN ORIENTAL
MONTE CARLO
NEW YORK–NEW YORK
BALLY'S
PLANET HOLLYWOOD
EXCALIBUR
CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT
BALLY'S
CAESARS PALACE
FLAMINGO
PARIS
PLANET HOLLYWOOD
MGM GRAND
LUXOR
THE LINQ
HARRAH'S
THE CROMWELL
RIO
(NOT PICTURED)
MANDALAY BAY
N
DELANO
MGM RESORTS
EXCALIBUR
MONTE CARLO
NEW YORK–NEW YORK
MGM GRAND
MANDALAY BAY
DELANO
BELLAGIO
THE MIRAGE
LUXOR
CIRCUS CIRCUS
SHADOW CREEK
(NOT PICTURED)
ARIA
VDARA
MANDARIN ORIENTAL
THE CRYSTALS

If Disneyland was built as a place of adventure and escape for kids, it's only logical that somewhere in America there would be a special place where adults could have their fun without the stories following them home.

In the past two decades, many mergers and acquisitions have resulted in MGM Resorts International and Caesars Entertainment having the deepest portfolios of holdings. Between them, the companies own 23 hotel and casino properties in Las Vegas, and both have numerous other national and international holdings.

There are two other gaming giants whose shadows loom large over the city: Sheldon Adelson, of Las Vegas Sands Corp., and Steve Wynn, of Wynn Resorts. While those two billionaires don't own as many Las Vegas properties as MGM and Caesars, they have garnered more individual attention than the others for their every business and political move.

Sheldon Adelson

A self-made billionaire, Adelson was ranked as the 15th Wealthiest American on *Forbe*s magazine's 2015 list, with a net worth of $26 billion. Adelson was raised from humble beginnings in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston; his family was of Ukrainian Jewish descent. From his boyhood start selling newspapers to operating vending machines, developing condominiums, and helping small businesses go public, Adelson worked his way up to hosting trade shows. For years he ran and managed a high-tech convention in Las Vegas called Comdex. Some locals referred to the annual gathering of more than 100,000 high-tech convention delegates as "Revenge of the Nerds," but the conference was a terrific boon to the city's economy. Adelson sold his convention business in 1995 for $862 million, and having watched entrepreneurs like Wynn and smaller operators make their fortunes in the gaming and tourism business, he decided that would be his next bold move.

Many critics scoffed at the decision, opining that Adelson would be a Johnny-come-lately to a gaming industry that required years of seasoning and experience. Like Wynn did years earlier, he would prove them wrong. In 1989, he bought an iconic Strip property, the Sands Hotel, where the ghosts of the Rat Pack still lingered.

It was during the year before the 1960 presidential election that Sinatra and friends, known as the Rat Pack, were performing together onstage at the Sands Hotel. These unscripted performances, which would often start with Frank or Dean singing a song as though it were a one-person act, would turn into joke fests as one by one the other members of the Pack sauntered onstage to sing, dance, or make jokes. The height of the Rat Pack's popularity came in 1960, when they starred in the film *Ocean's 11,* with a fantastic plot about ripping off a major casino. The atmosphere at the Sands was so high-spirited that on many nights Sinatra and Martin would enter the blackjack pit and deal live action to hotel guests. They would even coach gamblers on whether to hit or stand, and if their advice proved wrong, they would pay off a losing hand anyway.

Adelson tore down the Sands and built a tribute to the Italian city where he had proposed to his wife, Miriam. The Venetian opened in 1999 next to the Sands Expo and Convention Center. Like his Strip neighbor Wynn, Adelson added a sister property to the Venetian when he opened the Palazzo in 2008.

Steve Wynn

No one individual is more responsible for the glamour and essence of current-day Las Vegas than Wynn. From his start in 1967 as a minority owner of the Frontier Hotel, Wynn has pulled off one masterstroke after another, becoming the principal stockholder of the downtown Golden Nugget casino in 1973, at just 31 years of age. More than a decade later he transformed the small property into the jewel of downtown with junk-bond financing from his Wall Street friend Michael Milken.

Wynn's boldest Las Vegas move came in 1989. Again with Milken's funding, and with the counsel of longtime power broker E. Parry Thomas, he shifted his attention to the Las Vegas Strip, where he built the Mirage for $700 million. Despite the warnings of many gaming-industry analysts who decried the property as a sure loser and said Wynn would need to reap a million dollars a day from the casino, restaurants, and rooms to stay afloat, Wynn didn't blink. And in fact, the Mirage did much better than that. Not only was it a business success but the resort also significantly raised the bar for hotel elegance and amenities. With a $13 million, regularly erupting volcano fronting the property, features like a dolphin pool and a white tiger habitat, and illusionists Siegfried & Roy packing his showroom, Wynn's new creation instantly surpassed Caesars Palace as the most luxurious resort in town. The same month the hotel opened, Wynn introduced Shadow Creek Golf Club to his select list of celebrity friends and high-rolling gamblers. Within four years, the course was rated among the 10 best in the world. But Wynn wouldn't rest for long on those laurels. As he said in an early-1990s interview, "My biggest thrill as a developer is planning these resorts and adding all those 'wow' elements that people will enjoy. But after the opening, and watching the excitement of our customers, I'm ready to move on to another challenge."

He would do just that in building Treasure Island Hotel and Casino, offering sidewalk strollers on the Strip a free show in which pirates and barely clad sirens waged a nightly battle, complete with booming cannons. It was Las Vegas hype and kitsch at its finest.

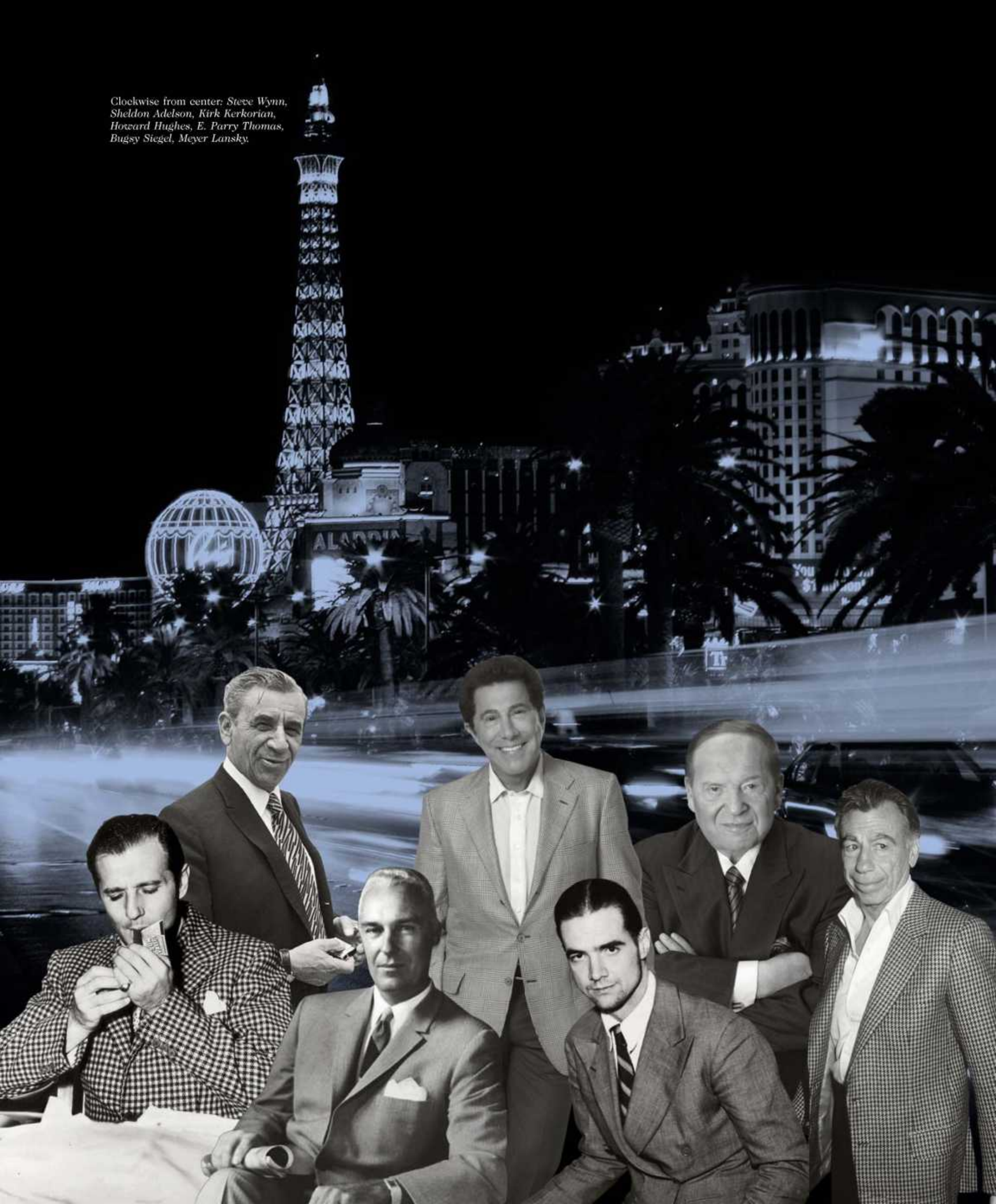
Wynn topped himself again in 1998, when he built Bellagio, named after a village in Italy, and critics hailed it the equal of European culture and class. Once again, he fronted the hotel with a spectacle: a majestic dancing fountain accompanied by music from the likes of Frank Sinatra and Andrea Bocelli.

Having poured his entire career and artistic energy into elevating Las Vegas from a town of neon-covered boxes to luxurious resorts that architectural critics praised, Wynn shocked the gaming world in 2000 by selling his entire portfolio of Las Vegas hotels to Kirk Kerkorian's MGM Grand, for a price tag of $6.4 billion.

Just weeks before that deal closed, Wynn had purchased the historic Desert Inn for $270 million. Five months later he tore it down, and today that site is home to his self-named Wynn Las Vegas and its sister property, Encore. Both resorts feature five-star restaurants, big-name stars and acts in their showroom, and nightclubs that bring huge revenues to the bottom line. The megadeal between Wynn and Kerkorian aligned visionaries from different eras. Kerkorian was 83 when the deal was consummated, and he stayed highly active behind the scenes of the Strip until his death last June, at 98. Wynn admired the entrepreneur greatly. Kerkorian had, over the years, owned a charter airline company and the MGM movie studio, and was a major shareholder in both Chrysler and General Motors. He had built the largest hotels in the world in Las Vegas: the International in 1969 (which later became the Las Vegas Hilton), the original MGM Grand in 1973 (which was damaged in a fire in 1980, claiming 85 lives), and the second MGM Grand in 1993.

An interview with Steve Wynn follows.

CLOCKWISE FROM CENTER: COURTESY WYNN LAS VEGAS; BOB RIHA JR. /GETTY IMAGES; RON GALELLA, LTD./WIREIMAGE; NEW YORK TIMES CO. /GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY STEPHENS PRESS; AMERICAN STOCK/GETTY IMAGES; AP PHOTO



Clockwise from center: *Steve Wynn, Sheldon Adelson, Kirk Kerkorian, Howard Hughes, E. Parry Thomas, Bugsy Siegel, Meyer Lansky.*

Encore
Wynn

Titan

PLAY TO WYNN

A conversation with the man responsible for modern-day Vegas.

Steve Wynn was the oldest child of Mike and Zelma Wynn. His father, a bingo-parlor operator, took a 10-year-old Steve to Las Vegas to open a new venture above the Silver Slipper casino. The business failed quickly, muscled out by a heftier competitor called the Golden Nugget. The trip wasn't lost on young Steve Wynn, though.

Wynn went on to attend the University of Pennsylvania with aspirations of becoming a doctor, took business classes at Wharton, and worked in his father's D.C. bingo parlor on Sundays. Mike Wynn's sudden death devastated his son, who dropped his own plans and took over his father's business.

That's when Vegas came calling. Wynn made his first investment in the Frontier, a new resort on the Strip, in 1967. By 1973, at the age of 31, he owned 400,000 shares and was elected president and chairman of the Golden Nugget, the same establishment that had crushed his father's short-lived attempt to get a foothold in Vegas years earlier.

For Wynn, Vegas was about connections, risk, playing big, and thinking beyond the gambling business to the much larger game of resorts and destinations. He built for the child in everyone with an uncanny feel for the next big thing. In the decades since Wynn has been the major player, Vegas has developed its scope from casinos and entertainment to being a destination with some of the best restaurants, spectacles, nightclubs, and shopping in the world. And Wynn has been at the forefront of all these expansions. His prescient investments in Macao casinos right before the crash of 2008 helped steer Las Vegas through the tough years that followed.

Wynn has said, "Being visionary just means you know where the market wants to go five minutes before the next guy." Those five minutes have, in large part, created the Vegas we know today.

Jack Sheehan interviews the man who can see the future.

You've been shaping the Las Vegas landscape for 40 years. Do you ever take the time to reflect on what has happened here?

Last night I was showing part of the hotel [Wynn Las Vegas] to some people, and I went up in the lift in the mountain at the Lake of Dreams. Then I immediately went down underwater in the lighting booth, under the showroom of Le Rêve, to see what was going on there. I had never done that before. I started to observe the miraculous things that are done to pull this all off, and the divers and how busy they were while the show was on. It dawned on me what incredible and complicated places these are that we've designed and built.

I'm not one to reflect for long on that, though. I love the process that created these places, and that's all I care about. Once a property or challenge is completed, I'm always anxious to move on to the next one. On those occasions when I'm riding down the Strip, I will sometimes lament how ugly some of the places are, and I'm disappointed when someone

Text by JACK SHEEHAN

does a bad job with a property. Without picking on anyone, I've been more disappointed through the years with the competitors and their lack of imagination and taste than I've been impressed with my own work.

What's your read on the Las Vegas economy as we begin 2016?
Let me ask you the same question I ask my board of directors when we're meeting: Do you think there's any doubt that for the next 10 or 20 years Las Vegas will be a major destination, with its 160,000 hotel rooms and its infrastructure?

I think that's a safe bet.
My approach to solving problems and answering complicated questions is to back up until I get to a simple truth that there's no doubt about. Then I go forward one step at a time.

Now, we know why people come to Las Vegas, don't we? They come to live large, to do something they can't do at home. To have a wild experience, like kids going to Disneyland. That's a simple truth. We know historically that the town has always gone to the showmen—whoever gave the people what they wanted has been a winner here. So the town goes to the showmen, people come here to live big, and they will stay in that frame of mind as we go forward. The answer to the question is that the economy of Las Vegas will remain as it's always been—either very strong, weak, or troubled, but the best joints in town will make whatever money is left. This is a real safe place to go forward if you know your business and have the capital. But be aware that this is no place for short money.

You've spoken often about the sadness of losing your father when you were just 21, and how that redirected the course of your life. I imagine you reflect often about what it would mean for him to see the success you've enjoyed.
Both my parents were raised in single-parent households. My mother, Zelma, never really knew her father much, and my father's mother died when he was a year old, in the influenza epidemic. While neither of my parents had a bad childhood, you could say they were underprivileged.

When I was 10 years old, my father brought me to Las Vegas with him for two weeks, and his father, Jake Weinberg, came over to see his son and grandson. As an old vaudevillian, Jake danced with some of the showgirls that were performing in the Minsky Revue on top of the Silver Slipper casino. My father recorded the dancing with a 16-millimeter Bell & Howell camera. It was a riot.

My old man had, years earlier, at age 18, wanted to get a job with Coca-Cola, as a sign painter, but they wouldn't hire Jews during the Depression. So he used the name of Ed Wynn, a popular comedian who was Keenan Wynn's father. Eventually, he legally changed our last name to Wynn.

With the new name, he got the job with Coca-Cola, making $128 a week working in the morning painting signs for billboards, and at night painting signs for the Revere, Massachusetts, bingo parlor, which is how he got into the bingo business.

Years later, our company is number two on the cover of *Fortune* magazine as a Most Admired company in America, behind Coca-Cola. At the awards event in Atlanta—the CEO Summit—they were all there: Microsoft, Warren Buffett, Ralph Larsen of Johnson & Johnson, all those people. I met the CEO of Coke, a Cuban immigrant named Roberto Goizueta, and he had a thick Cuban accent, like Al Pacino in *Scarface*. I told him the story of my father working as a sign painter for Coca-Cola. Until he died of cancer, Roberto remained my friend.

We've always served Coke products at Wynn, and last year, to honor us, on 24,000 bottles of Classic Coke they printed WYNN LAS VEGAS—10TH ANNIVERSARY.

Can you imagine, to a Depression kid from Revere, Massachusetts, if I could show my father a Coke bottle with his name on it, what a juxtaposition of fate that would be? You talk about one kick in the ass; that would take the cake. Not the private jets or the hotels or the paintings or the money or all that stuff—if my old man could see his name on a Coke bottle, I can't imagine what could top that.

When you speak to bright young people and they ask you the inevitable questions about achieving success or being entrepreneurial, what do you tell them?
I've noticed that it's almost impossible to anoint anybody, as much as you wish you could. That drive—that desire to accomplish something, and being dissatisfied with the status quo, having your eyes on something that you want to do and figuring out a thousand different ways to break the code or find the door in when all the rest are locked—that seems to be a personality trait that is inherent in the person. Incidentally, when I meet a young person who has that trait, it stands out like a sore thumb. Now, there is an endless list of kids who want to be entrepreneurial, but whether they have it or not is something that's probably already been decided.

The biggest revelation I can share with these people, which applies to almost every business, is that I've found that money alone doesn't make ordinary people behave in extraordinary ways, which is what leadership is about. The secret of real, unbelievable performance is to somehow equate people's enhanced self-esteem to something that happens on the job. It's demonstrating to employees that working at the company means they belong to a club that's hard to join, that it's a point of pride. Everybody likes being number one.

Condé Nast Traveler informed us recently that, for the ninth year in a row, their readers' poll selected the Wynn as the best hotel in Las Vegas. That's real important to my employees, because our people who work here love the idea that this is the best place. And that attracts the kind of people who care about stuff like that, and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I believe it was 1982, in Atlantic City, that I gave new cars to all 377 of my supervisors. This was at a time when they were laying off workers all over town, and every worker in the city was worried about losing his job. Obviously, the people who got the cars were thrilled, but what knocked me out was that our employees who worked for the 377 supervisors were just as thrilled, because it meant there weren't going to be any layoffs, and that the Golden Nugget of Atlantic City was successful and safe, not like the other joints that were struggling. They started bragging to their friends about it: Did you hear that Steve Wynn bought new cars for all his supervisors? It harnessed thermonuclear power in the human resources area, and that didn't just strengthen the company, it created a culture. I couldn't believe the impact of that gesture on the rest of the employees. It caused them to stick their chests out. I thought, *Holy smokes!*

You're 73, and have accomplished so much. Is there anything you'd put at the top of your bucket list?
I always wanted to meet Nelson Mandela, and I have friends who knew him, but I didn't get to meet Mandela. I always thought he was a spectacular character.

What excites me the most is working on new projects. I spent all day yesterday, and I'm going to spend time today, working on some of these. Life is good. I'm having the time of my life with [my wife] Andrea; we just giggle throughout the day.

When I'm working on these projects, I feel like a student. I've never felt like a master. I'm always thinking, *If I just bear down more, I'll find something new and terrific that will make people go, "Wow!"* Something as simplistic as that keeps me totally jazzed. I'm sure you know what I mean. As a writer working alone, you're looking for a perfect expression, the perfect description of an idea or a mood, and you find something that's just OK, but it's not perfect. Then you keep working and working, and then you get that tremendous click when you get it right. When that happens, it's such a lift. It doesn't happen very often, but when it does, that's the feeling we're all looking for.

PREVIOUS PAGE: COURTESY WYNN LAS VEGAS (2). OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY WYNN LAS VEGAS

Wynn and Frank Sinatra.

THE WYNN PORTFOLIO

Text by ANDREA BENNETT

Wynn and Encore

Steve Wynn has been fine-tuning the way people experience casinos since he first opened the Mirage in the late 1980s. The Wynn signature at Wynn Las Vegas and Encore is natural sunlight, which you'll find in massive atriums along the shopping esplanades. The shopping is unparalleled. You'll also find a very popular poker room and a sunlit, high-limit slot room where people drop $1,000 on a single machine. Discreet venues such as Andrea's and Country Club draw politicians, Hollywood royalty, rock stars, and power brokers—sometimes dining together. But true to form, Wynn is making some significant changes this year: Tryst, one of the earliest nightclubs at Wynn, is out, making way for Intrigue. Encore Player's Club, a new high-end poker room, just opened in December across from Andrea's in Encore, and Jardin—a new restaurant that will take advantage of gorgeous views of two pools—will replace the formerly dark Botero.

Wynn and Encore Esplanades

wynnlasvegas.com/amenities/shops

Las Vegas casts a certain spending spell on its visitors; locals like to call it the "Vegas effect." Brands like Ermenegildo Zegna, Bugatchi, and John Varvatos, and younger brands like Psycho Bunny, are flying off the shelves at the Wynn Collection.

Wynn Las Vegas

wynnlasvegas.com

The high-limit slot room at Wynn Las Vegas has a hushed atmosphere, and a lotus flower fountain presides over the room from the other side of a giant wall of glass. Its $1,000 coin slot machine—yes, that's $1,000 per spin—is one of the priciest in Vegas (and its jackpot is $2.5 million).

SW Steakhouse

wynnlasvegas.com/dining/finedining/SWSteakhouse

The very private SW Steakhouse overlooks the Lake of Dreams. David Walzog's menu offers one of the few chances to dine on genuine certified Kobe beef straight from Japan. Walzog's chili-rubbed double rib eye was featured on the Food Network's *The Best Thing I Ever Ate.*

Encore Beach Club

wynnlasvegas.com/nightlife/EncoreBeachClub

Famous for its world-renowned DJ acts, Encore features a quality party atmosphere usually found only in European hot spots. The 60,000-square-foot venue features three tiered pools, daybeds, cabanas, and bungalows. You can rent a cabana for the day, or settle for a lily pad.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: IAN DAGNALL/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; ALL OTHERS COURTESY WYNN LAS VEGAS

Encore Tower Suites

wynnlasvegas.com/roomssuites/EncoreTowerSuites

Only recently did pictures emerge online of the three-bedroom duplex at Encore Tower Suites at Wynn Las Vegas. The nearly 6,000-square-foot retreat has three master bedrooms, an elevator and butler's pantry, a game room, and exercise and massage rooms.

Andrea's

wynnlasvegas.com/dining/finedining/Andreas

At Wynn, the futuristic-looking Andrea's, named after Steve Wynn's wife, was designed by Todd-Avery Lenahan. The menu slants toward Asian, with dishes from Joseph Elevado that include a Wagyu beef and lobster roll, a New York strip steak with wasabi demi-glace, and a five-spice garlic lobster.

XS xslasvegas.com

XS at Encore Las Vegas leads the list of top-grossing nightclubs in America, with a revenue of $103 million to $105 million. It offers the chance to see the world's biggest DJs.

Surrender surrendernightclub.com

A nightlife venue with both indoor and outdoor spaces can be a godsend for claustrophobic clubgoers. But you don't have to be neurotic to enjoy the beauty of Surrender, the Encore's resident club.

i STEVE WYNN BY THE NUMBERS

- **1967**: Wynn pays $45,000 for 3 percent of the Frontier Hotel, becoming a minority shareholder. He is 25 years old.
- **1971**: Negotiates for and buys the only property that Howard Hughes sold in Las Vegas, a strip of land next to Caesars Palace. He then sells it to Caesars and nets $766,000.
- **1973**: Has approximately 400,000 shares and is elected president and chairman of the Golden Nugget. He is 31 years old.
- **1989**: Opens the Mirage for $620 million.
- **1989**: Introduces the Shadow Creek Golf Course, rated among the 10 best courses in the world.
- **1993**: Opens Treasure Island for $450 million.
- **1998**: Opens the Bellagio for $1.6 billion. At the time, it was the most expensive hotel ever built.
- **2000**: Shocks the world by selling his entire portfolio to Kirk Kerkorian's MGM Grand for a price tag of $6.4 billion.
- **2005**: Opens the Wynn Las Vegas for $2.7 billion, making it the most expensive privately funded construction project in the U.S. at that time. It is considered one of the best hotels in the world.
- **2008**: Opens Encore for $2.3 billion.
- **TODAY**: Wynn Resorts is recognized with more *Forbes Travel Guide* five-star awards than any other independent hotel company in the world. It has holdings in Vegas, Macao, and, soon, Boston.

THE MATHEMATICIAN WHO BEAT THE DEALER

A conversation with Ed Thorp, the man who revolutionized card counting.

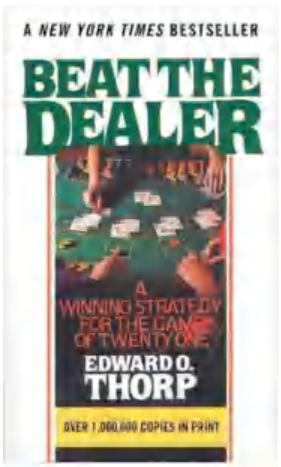
Text by BEN MEZRICH

Edward O. Thorp is a mathematics professor, hedge fund manager, and the author of the best-selling book *Beat the Dealer,* which mathematically proves that the house advantage in blackjack can be beaten by card counting. Thorp wrote his book when casinos began pressuring him off the floor after many remunerative forays.

As a highly trained mathematician and scientist, what caused you to gravitate toward casinos and specifically blackjack?
When I was in high school, I was interested in science. I had my own lab and delivered newspapers to make money to pay for equipment. This was during World War II and right after, when money was always scarce. One thing I was interested in was physics. One night, I was at a teacher's house, and the teacher had just come back from Vegas and was complaining that nobody could beat those guys. I thought about it, and at first I started focusing on roulette. I realized you could probably beat roulette by predicting the motion of the ball around the wheel. I tried to explain how to my teacher.

Years went by, and in the '50s, when I was getting my masters in theoretical physics, I kept hearing people say you couldn't beat the casinos. Again, looking at roulette, I believed you could make a machine that could predict the spin and beat the game. I got a movie camera and a wheel and began filming spins. I used the information to start designing a machine that could beat roulette.

After that, when I was at UCLA, I was teaching after getting my Ph.D., and I had a year of instructorship before going to MIT. During that Christmas vacation, someone told me about a way to play blackjack almost even with the house. You'd still lose, but you wouldn't lose much. I figured I'd risk a few dollars. I went to Vegas—really to look at roulette—but sat down at a blackjack table and played for 40 minutes. I had a strategy card I'd made, and people were laughing at me. I started making plays on a hand that everyone thought was crazy, but I was following strategy. I drew a seven-card 21. And people thought this magic card had helped me win.



Beat the Dealer, *Thorp's landmark 1962 book.*

I went back to UCLA, studied blackjack a little more, and immediately realized that this game was likely beatable, because as the cards were dealt, the quantities shifted around, sometimes in erratic ways that would have a huge influence on the odds.

What did you do with your system once you first developed it? Did you hit Vegas and win millions?
Actually, I presented the discovery at a meeting of the American Mathematical Society. At first, they were going to reject it, because they knew cranks present gambling systems all the time. Luckily, someone who knew me was on the committee and told them to listen to me, and I got to give my talk. There was a flood of interest and nationwide publicity; the place turned into a crowded room full of rich gamblers and ordinary mathematicians. One of these rich gamblers wanted to back me. I wasn't going to do it, but casinos were ridiculing me, saying blackjack was unbeatable and that "we send cabs for people like you." So I accepted the bankroll of two wealthy guys—they wanted to bring $100,000, which would be $1 million today. I said, "Let's bring 10K"—in case I lost. I told them, "If we play 20 hours, I can double your 10K." We played 40 hours—20 were just practice—and we made $11,000 on top of the $10,000, and I was satisfied. I cashed my part of the winnings at the MIT cafeteria and bought my lunch with a $100 bill.

Did you continue playing blackjack after that?
Yes, but I was eventually banned. I got more and more heat. They'd start cheating to beat me and shuffling up, and eventually they kicked me out of some casinos. So I wrote a book. I figured, You don't want me to play? I'll send some other people—a lot of other people.

Do you think there's an ethical difference between using a machine, like the one you designed to beat roulette, and card counting?
When I built a wearable machine to beat roulette, we tested it out and turned dimes into piles of dimes pretty quickly. At that time, those machines were not in the purview of the casinos; there was no law against them, no rules. Then people built more machines to beat roulette and even blackjack. In 1985, Nevada passed an emergency bill in record time to outlaw these devices. Any device the player brings in is now illegal. You can get a year in jail and a $10,000 fine. Even the little strategy cards in my book are technically illegal. I don't have a clue whether that law is fair or not. If I were running a casino, I'm sure I would be upset if guys were coming in with machines.

What about the Phil Ivey story and schemes that seek advantages through flawed games or mistakes the casinos make?
If the casino is using defective cards, that's their problem. Their job is to fix it. You can't expect to tell a player not to use his eyes, or not to play with whatever advantages the casino is presenting.

Are the casinos still beatable today?
I know they are. They're definitely beatable. I have friends who do it, multiple ways. Card counting and shuffle tracking. If the casinos use automatic shufflers, you can't shuffle track—but then the casinos have to pay a toll to rent the shufflers. They have to decide. Do they pay the toll for automatic shufflers, or do they lose money every now and then to people who know what they are doing?

Do you still go to Vegas today? Do you still play?
I go to Vegas. Blackjack is boring to me now. The stakes are too small. It's a lot of work to make a small amount of money.

For more on Thorp and his Wall Street mathematical magic, look out for a larger feature in a future issue of Maxim.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAM COMEN

TWENTY-ONE

Adapted from Ben Mezrich's book Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six MIT Students Who Took Vegas for Millions, *the film* 21 *chronicled the rise and fall of the ace blackjack team inspired by Ed Thorp's seminal* Beat the Dealer. *Mezrich on the night he learned the secret.*

Text by BEN MEZRICH

The setting: Boston, on one of those cold, gray nights that make you wish you were anywhere else. Ten minutes to two in the morning, the dark back corner of an MIT dive bar, close enough to the Charles River you can smell that dirty water. A place just about the polar opposite of Las Vegas—no neon, glitz, or anything approximating showgirls, just a geek hangout filled with math majors and physics wonks. Yet this is where I found myself thrown into one of the greatest Vegas stories I've ever heard.

And it all started with a hundred-dollar bill. More specifically, a lot of hundreds, from a pile of banded stacks totaling at least a quarter million, stuffed into an MIT kid's laundry. I'd been introduced to the kid, Jeff Ma, by a mutual friend, and at first he seemed like every other MIT kid—smart, good with numbers, socially awkward. But he and his friends had too much money, and all of it in hundred-dollar bills. The thing is, you never see hundred-dollar bills in Boston. In New York, you see them all the time; in Vegas, they come right out of the ATM. But in Boston, never.

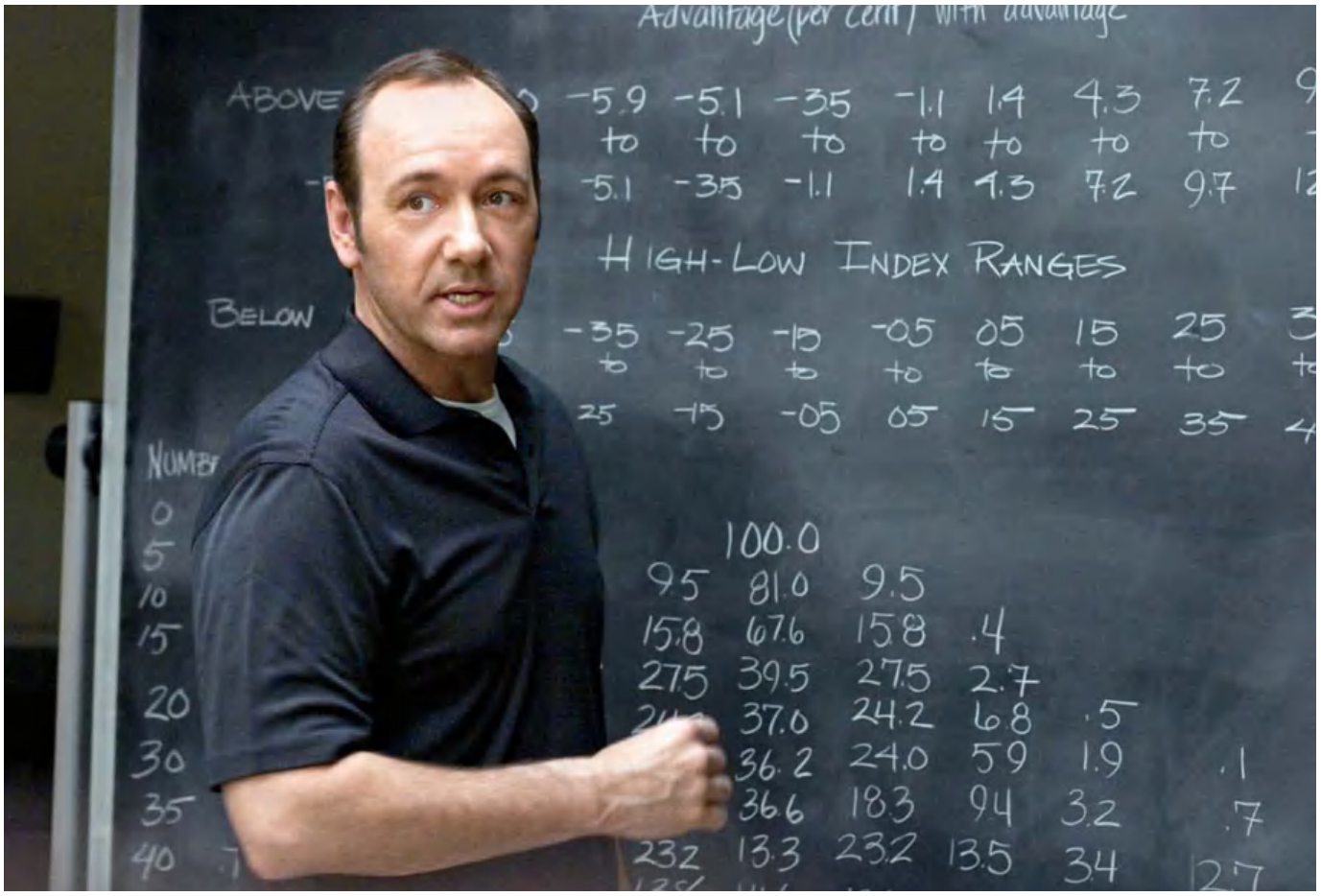
When I asked him about the money, he invited me to his apartment. Then he pointed to his laundry. A quarter-million dollars, stuffed among his dirty socks; I assumed he was a drug dealer. Still, when he asked me to go to Vegas with him the next day, I couldn't say no.

Five of his friends flew with us from Logan to McCarran, but they all pretended they didn't know each other. When we landed, a uniformed driver took us to a fantastic suite on the Strip: hot tubs, marble floors, a butler; the trappings of a true high roller. The MIT kids came into the suite one by one and started to pile money on the coffee table—cash they'd carried hidden under their clothes all the way from Boston. One million dollars in total.

"We're the MIT Blackjack Team," they told me.

With that, I was suddenly on the inside of a clandestine cabal that had been beating Vegas for more than 20 years. Secrets of blackjack had been handed down from one group of students to the next, and these kids I'd just met had won more than $6 million hitting the tables.

This was card counting taken to an entirely new level. Math used like magic to beat a beatable game. The system itself was simple: They'd spread out 10 college kids across a casino floor, one kid at each table keeping track of the cards. When the decks got good—meaning there were



Kevin Spacey as MIT professor Micky Rosa in 21.

© COLUMBIA PICTURES/COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT: CARLTON DAVIS/TRUNK ARCHIVE; CHRIS CRAYMER/TRUNK ARCHIVE; CLAUDIA & STEFAN/TRUNK ARCHIVE; LISA KERESZI/TRUNK ARCHIVE

more high cards (aces, kings, 10s) than low ones still in the deck—they would signal over the Big Player, usually Jeff Ma, often wearing a disguise, pretending to be a high roller, pretending to be drunk—hell, sometimes he'd even fill a thermos with apple juice, order a scotch, take it to the bathroom, and refill the glass from the thermos. After getting the signal, he'd bet big, the table limit. When the deck was no longer good, he kept walking. In this way, the big money was played on only "good" decks—and just like that, the MIT team had turned the tables on Vegas. They had a mathematical advantage of around 2 percent per hand, which doesn't sound like much unless you're betting $5,000 a hand. They'd win a few hundred thousand over a good weekend.

No matter how good a system is, you always need that bankroll. The MIT team used a stake that was passed down from previous generations of students; as one group graduated, they were allowed to invest in the next.

The money itself began to be the biggest problem with card counting. It isn't illegal to stuff a quarter-million dollars into a duffel bag and fly from Boston to Vegas. But if you get caught at Logan airport with that much cash, bad things happen to you. You end up in a cell beneath the airport, with agents from the DEA and IRS asking you a lot of questions. Eventually, you need a lawyer to get your own money back. To beat this, the MIT team would carry the cash under their clothes. They'd also begun storing the money on campus in an out-of-use iron safe they'd found in an administration building that had once been used for the university payroll. Every Friday morning, they'd make a withdrawal from the safe. Every Monday morning, they'd make a deposit. At one point, local newspapers in Boston carried a story about a garbage bag filled with $140,000 that was found in an MIT classroom. It turned out to be the winnings from a particularly good weekend in Vegas; one of the team members had forgotten the bag after a math test.

"THIS WAS CARD COUNTING TAKEN TO AN ENTIRELY NEW LEVEL. MATH USED LIKE MAGIC TO BEAT A BEATABLE GAME."

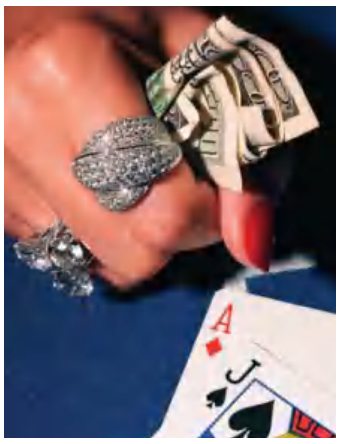
The more money the team's fake high rollers were winning, the more heat they began to get from Vegas.

At some point, the MIT team was taken down by private eyes, who followed them back to Boston and added all their faces to the recognition software the casinos use in their surveillance cameras. But the fact that Vegas now knows how card counting works doesn't mean the casinos can't still lose.

A quarter million in hundreds stuffed into an MIT kid's laundry, that's the story. You find the game that can be beat and you figure out how to beat it.

And then you beat the hell out of it.

KNOW THE ODDS



Blackjack

Number of hands you can expect to win when playing with perfect basic strategy: 48 percent. (You will lose $4 for every $100 bet.) Probability that the dealer will bust: twice for every 7 hands or 29 percent of the time. Frequency of basic-strategy player busts: once in every 6 hands or 16 percent of the time. Frequency of players getting blackjacks: fittingly, once out of every 21 hands.

Craps

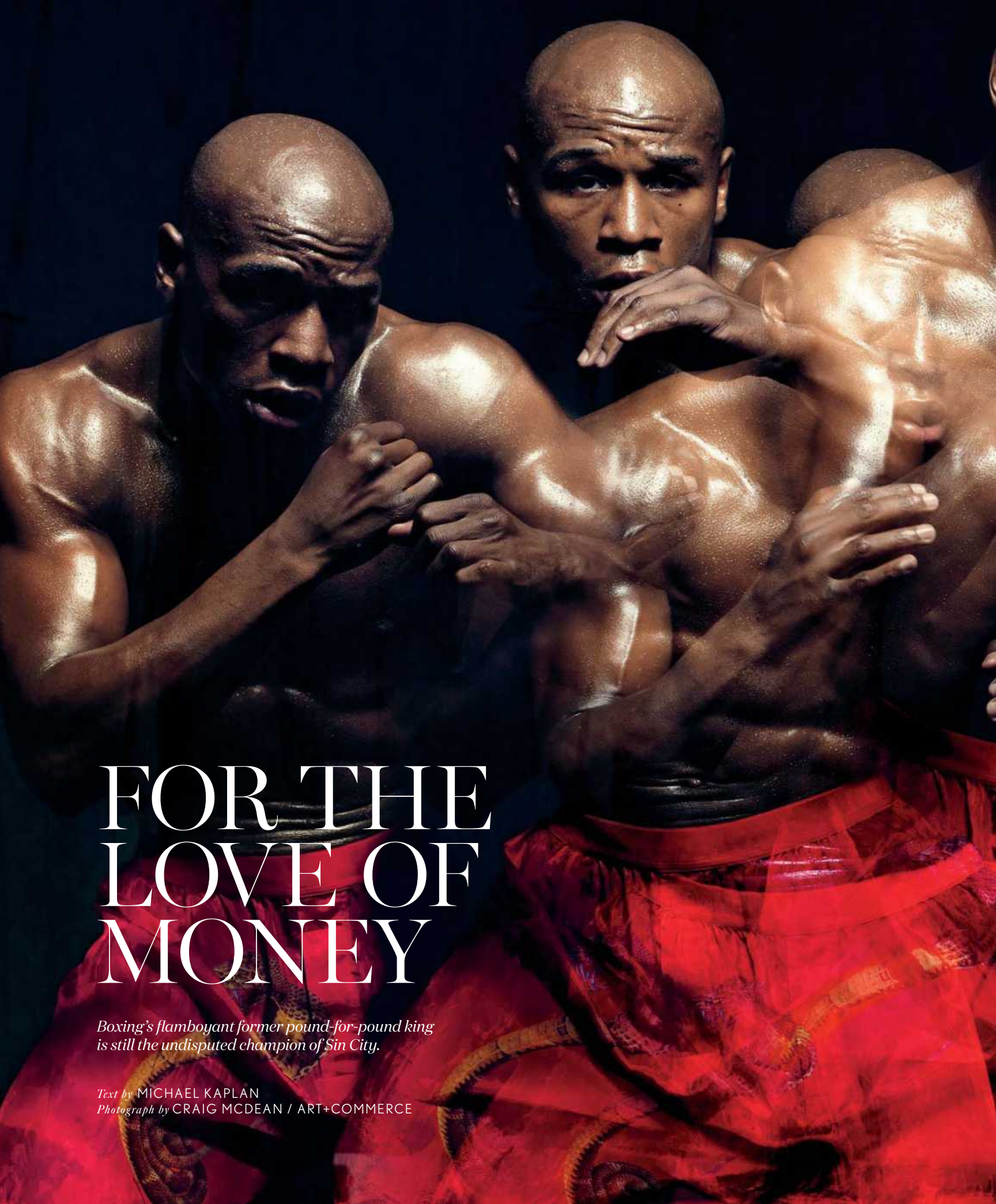
Longest stint shooting the dice at a craps table: 154 rolls over the course of 4 hours and 18 minutes at Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa in Atlantic City. Odds of such a monstrous roll happening: 1 in 1.56 trillion. The average number of rolls per shooter: 8.5. How often a player wins on a come-out roll: 22.22 percent of the time. Probability of hitting boxcars (two 6s): 1 in 36 or 2.77 percent. Payout for hitting boxcars: 30 to 1.

Roulette

Likelihood of hitting red, black, odd, or even: 47.37 percent. House edge on those bets: 5.26 percent. Likelihood of hitting any 1 of the roulette wheel's first 5 numbers: 13.16 percent, with a payout of 6 to 1. House edge on that wager: 7.89 percent (making it the worst bet on the wheel). Odds of hitting the same number 3 out of 4 times: 1 in 5,932.

Slot machines

Want to win big in Vegas? Play a Megabucks machine, part of a network of slots scattered throughout Nevada. Jackpots build with the revenue of losing players. Acing the top prize requires an investment of $3 per spin, but winners aren't complaining. Biggest win: $39,710,826, in 2003, at the Excalibur. Most recent win: $10,744,293, in 2015, at Westgate Resort & Casino. Only win of 2014: $14,282,544, at Rampart Casino. Luckiest casino of 2013: MGM Grand. Two jackpots totaling $22,800,785 were hit.



FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY

Boxing's flamboyant former pound-for-pound king is still the undisputed champion of Sin City.

Text by MICHAEL KAPLAN
Photograph by CRAIG MCDEAN / ART+COMMERCE

Floyd Mayweather may have left boxing, but his presence still looms large over Las Vegas. Parking valets covet the $100 bills he gives them to ensure they look after his $3.5 million Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse. Faces of casino bosses light up as Mayweather commandeers a craps table or places gargantuan sports wagers, which are often posted on Instagram when a winning slip yields a particularly outrageous six-figure sum. Auto dealer Josh "Chop" Towbin jumps out of bed at 3 A.M. when the call comes that the famously nocturnal Mayweather wants to do a little early morning Bentley shopping. And if the teetotaling boxing great wants to go club-hopping, last-minute texts ricochet out to his crew members and a posse as large as 20 convenes at hot spots like Drai's, Encore Beach Club, and Spearmint Rhino, the topless temple where Mayweather, a one-man revenue booster for Vegas, might walk in cradling bricks of cash worth $50,000 before making it rain on appreciative dancers. "We'll spend four hours in the place," marvels a member of Mayweather's The Money Team. "By the time we leave, I look down at the floor and think, *Shit, right there is a down payment on a house.*"

In the wake of his 2015 retirement from the sport he dominated for 17 years (he won his first world championship title in 1998), Mayweather, also known as Money and TBE ("The Best Ever"), is living large and relishing the freedom of being fight-free. "He's going everywhere, doing whatever he wants to do, having no schedule," says a Money Team member. "He wanted to go to Miami Beach for a week and wound up staying for a month at the Fontainebleau. He needed a car to get around in, so he bought a Jeep and a Bugatti. Then he hit Vegas for a day before flying to Moscow. And then he hit Monte Carlo, to hang out with some friends. Floyd just fires up the jet and takes off."

Though the globetrotting Mayweather is clearly a man of the world, he's most at home in Sin City, where he has lived since turning pro in 1996. While in town, Mayweather may host a dinner for 70 at N9NE steakhouse in the Palms, keep it intimate at SW in the Wynn, or hit up Fatburger for a 5 A.M. post-nightclub chow-down with his crew. The 24-hour fast-food emporium on the Strip so craves Mayweather's business that management there served up an organic burger to keep the clean-living boxer on his strict diet while he trained for his lopsided decision win over Manny Pacquiao. In true Vegas fashion, Mayweather pays for everything with cash, fishing banded stacks of hundreds out of ever-present backpacks designed by Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and the bedazzle-favoring custom-bag maker Louis Stewart.

Mayweather tips a valet in Vegas.

Money, Power, Respect

- Age: 38
- Professional Record: 49–0 (26 KOs)
- Number of world-title fights: 26
- Estimated 2015 earnings: $300 million
- Quickest knockout: 72 seconds (Tony Duran, May 1997)
- Career earnings: $700 million
- Amount he spent last year on his Koenigsegg CCXR Trevita and Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse: $8.3 million
- Number of private jets: 2 (1 for him, 1 for his entourage)

But his opulent lifestyle—and that estimated $230 million payday for easily outboxing Pacquiao—did not come by accident. For nearly 20 years Mayweather lived and breathed his boxing gym mantra "Hard work, dedication." His breathtaking pugilistic skills and trademark defensive wizardry were learned growing up in gritty Grand Rapids, Michigan, under the tutelage of his former world champion uncle Roger and boxer-turned-trainer Floyd Sr. The most talented scion of the Mayweather boxing dynasty rocketed his way up the sport's ranks starting with a pro debut at the low-rolling Texas Station Casino, where he scored a second-round knockout of some guy named Roberto Apodaca.

The impressive win kicked off a soon-to-be-predictable pattern; as a professional fighter, Mayweather racked up an undefeated 49–0 record, tying him with Rocky Marciano. But despite his tradition of using precision punching, dazzling ring IQ, and a seemingly impenetrable defense to overwhelm less-skilled opponents, Mayweather's highly technical style failed to make for particularly exciting victories. Back when he was a polite, soft-spoken Grand Rapids fighter known as "Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather, his virtuosity was lauded by boxing aficionados but didn't exactly thrill everyday fans. "Early on, he was not a draw and did not sell a lot of tickets," remembers Luis Monda, general manager of Johnny Tocco's Ringside Gym in Las Vegas, the place where Mayweather first trained for his professional fights. "Floyd's persona was that of a respectful and gracious and good guy. He thanked God after every match. People thought he came across as boring."

That all began to change in 2005, when Mayweather fought the popular blood-and-guts slugger Arturo Gatti. Before that pay-per-view showdown, Mayweather repeatedly dissed Gatti as a "club fighter" and a "bum" whose brutal brawls had been overly hyped by HBO. He entered the ring riding a throne with "Another One Bites the Dust" blasting on the sound system. In the ring, he was even flashier, viciously dismantling Gatti on the way to a sixth-round stoppage. By the time Mayweather took on Oscar De La Hoya, then the sport's most popular fighter, in 2007, he had morphed from boring Pretty Boy Floyd to the trash-talking Money Mayweather, a character seemingly inspired by the villainous heels of pro wrestling. During a promotional appearance in Los Angeles, Money asked an assistant to bring out De La Hoya; what emerged was a live chicken in a cage with a sign that read GOLDEN GIRL. Fans loved to loathe Mayweather, and pay-per-view orders soared to $136 million, making it the highest-grossing fight in boxing history (until he fought Pacquiao, of course). Mayweather pocketed $25 million and earned a split-decision win. "Floyd played the villain and blew it up," recalls Monda. "He took the personality and just ran with it."

For the next eight years, Mayweather continued to live large, talk smack, box carefully, and shatter financial records. (*Forbes* named him the world's highest-paid athlete last year.) Even when it seemed that the entire world wanted desperately to see Pacquiao knock his head off, TBE basked in every second of the glaring spotlight, while clowning his critics all the way to the bank. It all begs the question: Can Mayweather stay retired from the sport he ruled with a golden fist? Is the smart money on Mayweather coming back to the ring to reclaim his welterweight belts and notch that magical 50–0, raking in tens of millions and solidifying his legacy as one of the greatest of all time? Billy Baxter, a world-class gambler and longtime observer of Mayweather, is betting on his return. "There's still nobody out there who can beat him, and cash goes fast," says Baxter, who's sharp enough to have never wagered against Mayweather. "Why not put on your gloves and pick up another $50 million?"

BENJAMIN LOWY/GETTY IMAGES. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; ERIC JAMISON/GETTY IMAGES.

Mayweather after his win against De La Hoya in 2007.

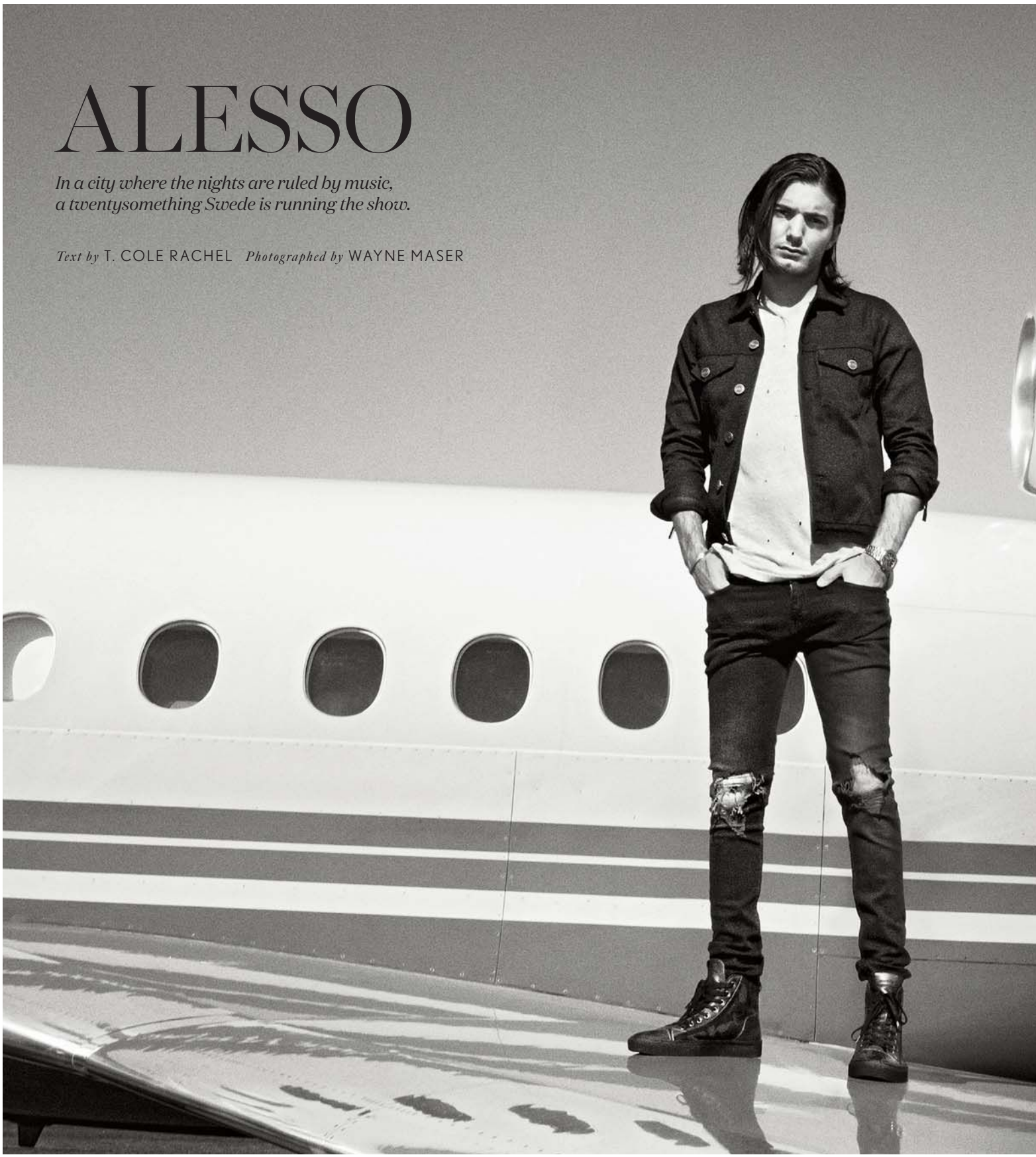
Floyd in his Bugatti, pulling up to Mayweather Boxing Club.

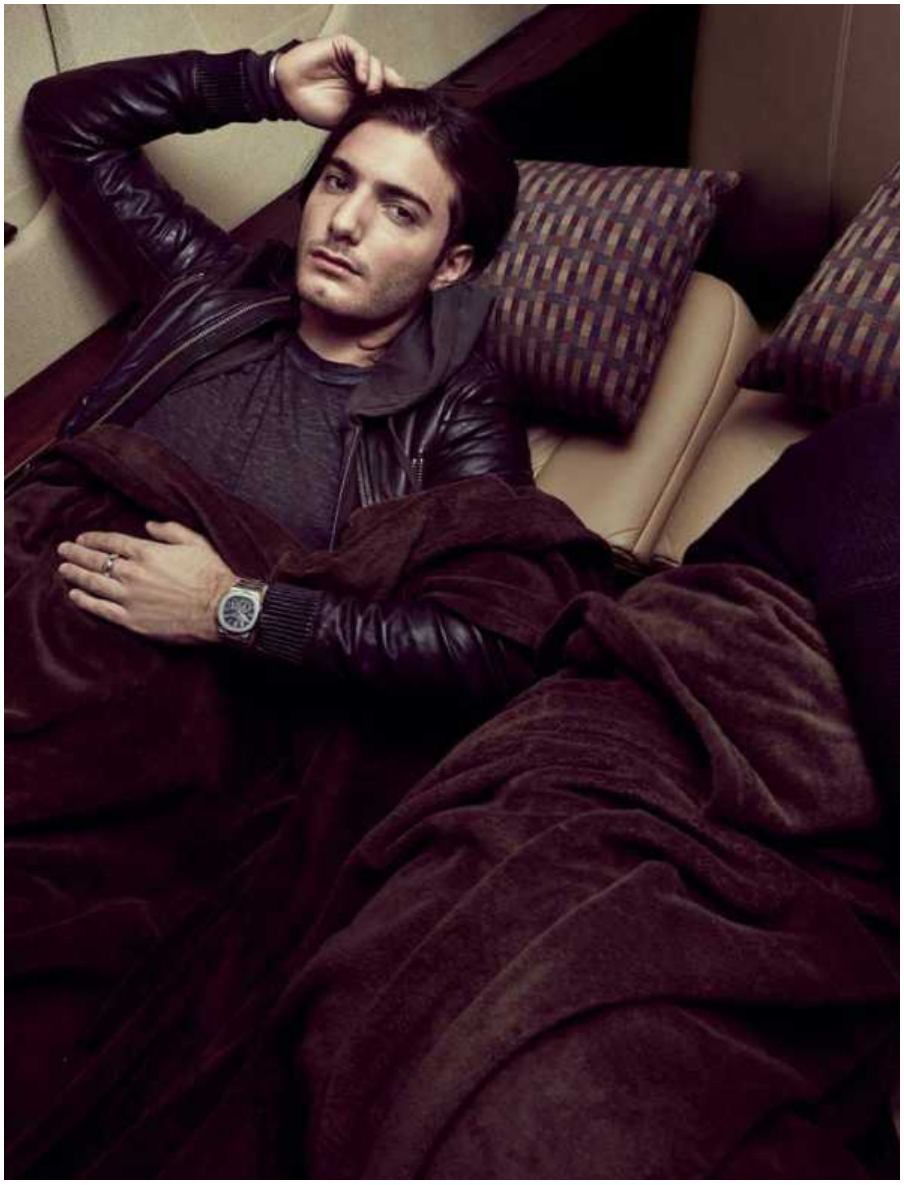
"HE PAYS FOR EVERYTHING WITH CASH, FISHING BANDED STACKS OF HUNDREDS OUT OF EVER-PRESENT BACKPACKS DESIGNED BY GUCCI, LOUIS VUITTON, AND THE BEDAZZLE-FAVORING CUSTOM-BAG MAKER LOUIS STEWART."

ALESSO

In a city where the nights are ruled by music, a twentysomething Swede is running the show.

Text by T. COLE RACHEL *Photographed by* WAYNE MASER





"AT THE END OF THE DAY, I'M A PRODUCER, AN ARTIST, I MAKE MUSIC. BUT WHEN I DEEJAY I HAVE ALL THESE OTHER CHOICES I CAN MAKE. I'M THERE TO ENTERTAIN."

Giving credence to the notion that Sweden will somehow always produce the world's best pop music, 24-year-old Alessandro Lindblad—better known as Alesso—has, over the course of the past four years, gone from playing small clubs in the U.K. to touring with Madonna, producing internationally game-changing hit singles like "Heroes (We Could Be)," and performing for crowds of more than 60,000 people. In addition to releasing an album in May of last year—the aptly titled *Forever*—and maintaining a rigorous global touring schedule, Alesso currently holds down a Vegas DJ residency at XS at the Wynn, one of the city's biggest and most beloved clubs.

Did you always have a sense that you would make music?
Yeah, I was always the only one in my family that was crazy about music. Since I was five years old, I liked to perform and dance and sing Michael Jackson songs and that kind of stuff. I always wanted to be onstage. I danced a lot. Then I started playing piano. I was always surrounded by music, but just because it was my interest. I don't come from a really musical family.

I knew I always wanted to do something with music, but I just didn't know what until I found out about dance music. I'd heard dance music before, like ABBA, but this was a different kind of dance music. This was really cool and underground, and I got addicted to it. The whole DJ-culture scene back then was so underground, and there was nothing like that in Sweden. That was around the time YouTube came out, so I could YouTube everything. I was looking at that world through YouTube videos.

What came first for you? Was it deejaying or making beats and doing production?
Making beats came first for me because it's so expensive to buy the equipment to deejay. I was only 16, and I already knew that if I wanted to become a big DJ, I'd need to have good records. So I sold my scooter and bought the MacBook with Logic Pro and started making beats, and then eventually I bought my first equipment.

Do you remember the first thing that you made where you thought, *All right. This is good. I could play this for people*?
Yeah, totally. I still have those records. I haven't put them out, but I still have them. It's fun to listen to how my music sounded when I was 16 compared with today.

It's funny that you mentioned ABBA, because Americans have such intense associations with Sweden and pop music. What is it about Swedish culture that makes for such good pop music?
That's the constant question I get asked. There's not really an answer for it except it just happened to be that way. Still, I think if I would have been raised here in the States or somewhere else besides Sweden, I don't think my music would sound at all like it does today. The whole vibe around Sweden, and also the desire to make it outside of Sweden, really pushes you. It's like Brazil. There are so many amazing soccer players coming from there; why? It's kind of in their DNA. Maybe pop music is a little bit in our DNA, who knows?

Do you remember the first time you ever played in Vegas?
I remember for sure. I hated it so much! I was 19, and you're allowed to drink and go out in Sweden when you're 18, so I felt like a kid again in Vegas. I know I was young, but I felt really young there. I remember I was standing on the balcony of my hotel and I could see all the DJs partying at the Marquee pool party, and I was just like, *What the fuck is this? Why am I not there?* My first actual shows were at XS—that's where it all started for me. There were always two security guards looking after me, watching me so that I couldn't drink. They told me that was the first time they'd ever had an underage DJ perform.

OPPOSITE PAGE: DAVID BECKER/WIREIMAGE

Previous page: *Jacket,* EN NOIR $555; ennoir.com. *T-shirt,* IRO $110; iroparis.com. *Jeans,* TOPMAN $70; us.topman.com. *Shoes,* ALL SAINTS $268; us.allsaints.com. *Watch,* OMEGA. *Aircraft,* DASSAULT FALCON 900C; price upon request; dassaultfalcon.com.

You know, it's a casino, and it's very strict there. I knew Vegas could be so much more fun but because I couldn't drink and I couldn't go out, I couldn't do anything. It sucked.

Why does electronic music seem to go over so well in Vegas?
Because the whole nightlife scene in Vegas has changed. People are going to Vegas not just to gamble. Now you can actually see a superstar DJ like the ones playing these major festivals. It's a great party. People in Vegas know how to host a great night, you know?

Yeah. And your job is making people have a good time.
At the end of the day, I'm a producer, an artist, I make music. But when I deejay I have all these other choices I can make. I'm there to entertain.

You put out an album last year, but it's my understanding that you're going to start releasing singles and EPs instead of full-length albums going forward.
I put an album out last year, and I feel like it took a lot of time for me to put that music together. It took a year and a half, believe it or not, because I'm always on a crazy schedule and it's hard to find time. Even if someone says, "OK, yeah. Let's just finish this song." You don't know when it's finished until the contracts are signed, the publishing deal is done. It takes time. It's not like, "Oh, we'll go in, make a song, and we'll put it out tomorrow." That doesn't happen. So to do an album again—that's a lot of commitment. And to be honest, albums aren't the same thing today. People listen to music like it's candy. They listen to one song a hundred times, and then they switch to something else. It's not like it used to be. My first album was *Thriller* when I was a kid. I listened to that album all the time, and not just one side. I listened to all the songs. It was like entering a world of Michael Jackson. Now you have iTunes or Spotify or Apple Music and you can just pick whatever song you want to listen to and you just listen to that. You don't have to commit to a whole album, even if you like that artist.

Electronic music is this always-evolving thing. Where do you think this culture is going? And what's next for EDM?
If you look at the younger generation—kids that are 14 and 15—they are dying to go to these kinds of EDM shows. I have fans that are too young to go to my shows and I see how badly they want to. I remember in Sweden when I was young, everyone wanted to be a soccer player. Now everyone wants to be a DJ. Now everyone wants to produce house music and go to festivals. The only responsibilities I and the other big EDM producers have is that we need to keep it interesting. We shouldn't be leaning back now like, "We'll just keep making the same kind of dance records over and over." We have to keep changing and being influenced by different genres and constantly trying to create something new. Otherwise it's going to be like wearing the same perfume. You love it in the beginning. You can wear it for a while, but eventually you're going to maybe want to try something else, right?

Absolutely. Who influences you? What other DJs do you love?
I was at a Skrillex show last November at XS, actually. I stayed one more night in Vegas to see him. I wouldn't have stayed if it weren't him playing. Even though I'm doing this all the time and I'm listening to music all the time, when I knew Skrillex was going to play, I knew he would create a vibe that I would like...and he did.

Opposite page: *Jacket,* ALL SAINTS.
Sweatshirt, ALL SAINTS.
T-shirt, IRO. *Watch,* OMEGA.

Styling, Anna Land.
Hair, Nikki Pittam.
Grooming, Marlaine Reiner.

EXPECT EPIC

A definitive guide to doing Vegas like a boss.

Text by ANDREA BENNETT

Considering that seven of the 10 top-grossing nightclubs in the United States are in Las Vegas, it's pretty clear what tourists and locals alike are getting up to at night in Sin City. XS at Encore Las Vegas leads that list with 2014 revenue of $103 million to $105 million, according to industry authority *Nightclub & Bar,* followed closely by Hakkasan with $100 million to $103 million in the same year.

In the past few years, major-name DJs such as Kaskade, Calvin Harris, Tiësto, Armin van Buuren, Avicii, and Steve Aoki (name a dozen more—they're all here) have secured regular appearance schedules or established long—and longer-term—residencies in the city's clubs, commanding incomes comparable to those of top professional athletes. Vegas has become a capital of EDM, with festivals like Electric Daisy Carnival solidifying its dominance. And nightclub programming—which includes spontaneous star appearances—is reaching a fever pitch. Plus, if you want a Champagne shower administered by bodacious cocktail servers riding a 10-foot-tall Ferris wheel that's rolled to your party, Encore Beach Club has you covered (and this isn't the most outrageous way to celebrate, by a long shot).

But don't think that Vegas nightclubs are all just one giant EDM factory, with high-budget bottles delivered by flying, bikinied superheroes. There's plenty of diversity, and the nightclubs are looking toward new openings, more live music, and even a secret, social media–free club to shake things up this year.

At Wynn, where XS and Surrender retain mass popularity and Encore Beach Club is the gold standard among pool parties, the 1,200-capacity, "intimate" venue Tryst has been closed to make way for Intrigue, which opens in late April. "There will be an element of surprise to the club," promises Sean Christie, top brass in operations at Wynn. "That could mean that the venue changes or the music changes—we're not stuck to one format." Tryst's former kitchen will be turned into an invite-only, "no social media allowed" private club with its own entrances.

Meanwhile, expect the unexpected at Drai's, the 35,000-square-foot rooftop party zone atop the Cromwell, which glows at night beneath the towering palms surrounding its main swimming pools. Credited as the founder of the nightclub scene in Las Vegas, Victor Drai has purposely gone the opposite way of those many clubs that boast bold-faced DJs. "My original thought [for Drai's] was that by the time I opened the club, the DJ craziness would be over, but that wasn't the case," Drai says. Nevertheless, he went into live hip-hop, signing Chris Brown to a residency. ("Everyone who works for me was scared—I'm used to my people being scared about things.") He renewed Brown's residency for 2016 and added ones for Trey Songz and A$AP Rocky. Also on the docket: the Weeknd, Big Sean, Future, Niykee Heaton, Fabolous, Tyga, and more. "What people are expecting at my club is that if you come to see Chris Brown or another artist, they're right there in your face. Sometimes it's like, Trey Songz and 50 Cent are up there together and it's like the 1940s and '50s, but on a different scale."

In 2014, Hakkasan Group bought Light Group and transformed the old Pure space in Caesars Palace to Omnia, modeling the club after a four-story European opera house. It's been a massive showcase for celebrity DJs like Afrojack, Harris, and Van Buuren, to name a few. Nick McCabe, president of Hakkasan Group, says Omnia "will continue to embrace electronic music in the majority of our programming" in 2016, even bumping up the frequency of performances by favorite artists. In building Omnia, McCabe adds, the focus was on ensuring that the guest's view of the talent wouldn't be impaired no matter where they are in the club.

Hakkasan, the Cantonese-themed restaurant with locations in Mumbai, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Miami, and New York City, has its largest-ever location in the MGM Grand. While other Hakkasans the world over get clubbier as the night wears on, the Vegas location combines the restaurant with a 60,000-square-foot, three-floor nightclub whose talent roster includes Hardwell, Tiësto, and Aoki. "It really is like a Roman arena in terms of the energy that gets created in that room," McCabe says. (Go there when Aoki is throwing cake and spraying Champagne and it can certainly feel that way.) But McCabe is looking forward to "a little more diversity in the music policy" in 2016; in other words, expect a few surprises.

When the Rockwell Group–designed Jewel opens at Aria in the spring—its nearly 2,000-guest capacity is considered small to midsize—Hakkasan promises a more intimate experience, with secluded suites above the dance floor, each with private entries, and a greater variety of music performances.

The club scene, Christie anticipates, is due for a "market correction" as current contracts are up and clubs diversify their offerings, because entertainment expenses have reached heights "that for some clubs are unsustainable." Still, he says, "A star is a star, and they get paid star money." Vegas won't be losing any stars in its entertainment universe anytime soon.

And as for another Vegas nightlife staple—the over-the-top bottle service presentation? According to Christie and McCabe, that's not disappearing either. "People who live outside Las Vegas save up to get these memorable experiences; we just have to do them in our own vocabulary," Christie says. This has translated into the "Hey, Big Spender" bottle-service presentation at Encore Beach Club, for example, wherein the bottle gets rolled in on a Harley Davidson that's yours to keep at the end of the night (price tag: $125,000, and one sold during the Mayweather vs. Pacquiao fight weekend). "As spending continues to rise, so do expectations in terms of the fanfare that surrounds the VIP experience," McCabe says. At Omnia, a giant Champagne bottle can be delivered by aerial performers who descend from openings in the roof, and at Hakkasan, a large order can be accompanied by a traditional Chinese dragon dance, he says. "Vegas has always been built on epic resorts, epic shows, epic attractions, and so we have to deliver an epic experience."

COURTESY OF OMNIA

DJ Payday

- One DJ's two-year residency in Vegas is $10 million. That doesn't include all his other income.
- Calvin Harris: $66 million (includes endorsements with Armani, plus six-figure DJ fees)
- David Guetta: $37 million: 30 shows in Vegas while maintaining a weekly residency in Ibiza.
- Tiësto: $36 million: 100 dates, plus deals with Guess and 7UP
- Skrillex: $24 million, 95 shows

* 2014 figures via *Forbes*

LUXURY SHOPPING

Where to spend your money.

The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace.

Las Vegas' emergence as a major retail destination is relatively new in terms of the city's evolution. Only a few years ago, shopping in Vegas was considered a diversion for the bored, mostly female, significant others of gamblers. Now the four-mile Strip is chock-full of the world's highest-end retailers, many in multiples. According to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, of the 41 million annual travelers who visit Las Vegas, 61 per cent go shopping. And many international visitors come to Las Vegas exclusively to buy luxury items—a trend that doesn't seem to be waning as the dollar strengthens.

Indeed, Hedy Woodrow, SVP of Retail at Wynn, says that Loro Piana's store on the Esplanade at Encore, which specializes in the brand's coveted vicuña wool items plus made-to-measure services, shoes, and men's accessories, "sees huge sales when the Asian royal families are here, and significant sales from the Middle East and Asian demographics."

Service to foreign visitors is something the Forum Shops loves to tout. Maureen Crampton, the mall's director of marketing, says it has higher sales per square foot than Rodeo Drive (owner Simon Property Group's annual sales were more than a billion last year). The Forum Shops, Vegas' premier shopping destination, keeps a roster of employees who speak languages other than English—more than 20 languages in all—and can quickly access them from around the Forum to translate for non-English-speaking shoppers. "Recently, we had a Russian-speaking dignitary in, who was shopping and needed a translator, so we consulted our list and went to a restaurant that has a Russian server who was able to translate. That doesn't happen everywhere," she says.

Perhaps the most significant trend in recent years has been the entrance onto the market of less-expected brands (Moncler and Sandro in the Forum Shops, for instance), as well as those offering something exclusively for Vegas shoppers. At Hublot in the Forum Shops, for instance—a magnet for celebrities, boxers, and racecar drivers—you might find the coveted Hublot Las Vegas Aerofusion watch: Limited to 21 pieces and retailing for $21,000, it features the WELCOME TO FABULOUS LAS VEGAS sign on the back and a lucky number seven made of rubies on the dial.

"The transition of the shops is keeping pace with a male shopper that is

THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF CAESARS PALACE.
OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY OF THE SHOPS AT CRYSTALS

The Shops at Crystals in CityCenter.

so much more astute," Crampton says. "That's where our Canali and Zegna stores come into play." Canali's made-to-measure suiting, for instance, starts with a one-on-one consultation with a master tailor who has access to more than 500 Canali-exclusive fabrics; each Canali suit is constructed in Italy and finished with the owner's name embroidered on the label. The dedicated male shopper might also account for the recent expansion of the Tod's store—the only one in Las Vegas—which sells more than 700 pairs of its blue suede shoes each year. (Though there are 10 variations on Tod's blue suede shoe, its wild popularity here is attributed to the clear Vegas-Elvis association.)

Aside from the occasional and often blingy Vegas exclusives, what separates the Vegas shopping experience from other cities' is the service. Of course, this is true at the dramatic Daniel Libeskind–designed Shops at Crystals in the 76-acre, mixed-use CityCenter, where 500,000 square feet of retail, galleries, and restaurants contain superlatives like the largest Louis Vuitton in North America. Crystals is all about custom: Prada's location there is one of only 50 of its boutiques in the world to offer made-to-measure (introduced in 2015). Inside a VIP room, the store's master tailor guides clients through more than 230 exclusive fabrics including archival prints for bespoke dress shirts. Zegna and the massive, two-level Tom Ford offer custom programs of their own.

In the end, Wynn's Woodrow says, shopping in Vegas is about giving clients the same VIP service they expect in Vegas overall. For the star-studded Sinatra tribute filmed at Wynn's Encore Theater, which aired on CBS to commemorate Sinatra's 100th birthday back in December, one of Woodrow's stylists did what they often do—worked in conjunction with the stores on the Wynn and Encore esplanades to dress one of the prominent performers in his own suite before sending him out on stage. And you don't have to be the celebrity Wynn won't name to get the treatment. A portable Brioni Miror (used to help clients visualize their finished suits) is on the horizon, which will allow the boutique to bring the experience to clients via private appointments in their own suites. After all, shopping in Vegas is fabulous, but never leaving your own private villa is the ultimate luxury.

HOTELS

Where to rest your head.

Competition for visitor loyalty is so fierce in Las Vegas, hotel casinos are always getting refreshed, revamped, and rebranded. The Bellagio completed a $165 million, resort-wide renovation that involved about 4,000 rooms over four years. And the new-new things of two years ago—the old Sahara becoming the SLS; super-chef Nobu Matsuhisa opening the first-ever Nobu Hotel within Caesars Palace; the Hotel at Mandalay Bay transforming into Delano—are all thriving now. A sprawling Chinese-themed hotel, Resorts World Las Vegas, is on the rise on the north end of the Strip, as is Alon Las Vegas, an $8 billion project from Australian company Crown Resorts that has already poached Jesse Waits, the former managing director of Encore's XS nightclub—the highest-grossing nightclub in the United States—to run its nearly 57,000-square-foot day- and nightclub. Half the challenge in Vegas is catering to frequent visitors who are on the constant lookout for the newest and the most now.

Delano delanolasvegas.com

The Morgans Hotel Group smartly executed a Delano for the desert, with slatted gates opening onto massive boulders at the entry and Mojave-inspired abstract artwork. What Morgans wisely left intact is the beautifully austere, intimate Bathhouse Spa and the Alain Ducasse restaurant Rivea on the 64th floor, with unparalleled views. Skyfall Lounge is where you should begin and end, looking out of lofty windows onto a fiery sunset.

The Venetian venetian.com

With Venice as its design inspiration, the Venetian is a $1.5 billion themed extravaganza that features reproductions of Italian landmarks and motorized gondola rides. The hotel's spacious rooms are all at least 650 square feet apiece, with Roman tubs and separate showers in the bathrooms. Perhaps a tribute to the Italian celebration of food, the Venetian is a gastronomic paradise with more than 30 restaurants to choose from.

Aria Resort & Casino aria.com

Aria Resort & Casino, the Cesar Pelli–designed centerpiece of MGM's massive, 67-acre CityCenter development, which opened in late 2009, has since become well-known not only for catering to its upscale business clientele in 4,000 guest rooms but also for its high-tech amenities, eco-conscious design, sprawling casino floor, inventive dining scene, and incredible public art collection.

The Cosmopolitan cosmopolitanlasvegas.com

The lure of the Cosmo: a blend of riotous nightlife (Marquee Nightclub and the poolside Marquee Dayclub), boutique shopping and dining (rustic Italian at Scarpetta, a "secret" table inside Jose Andres' Jaleo, boozy shakes and great burgers at Holsteins, upscale Greek at Estiatorio Milos, and more), and a tri-level bar, the Chandelier, whose two million crystals enclose three distinctly different drinking experiences.

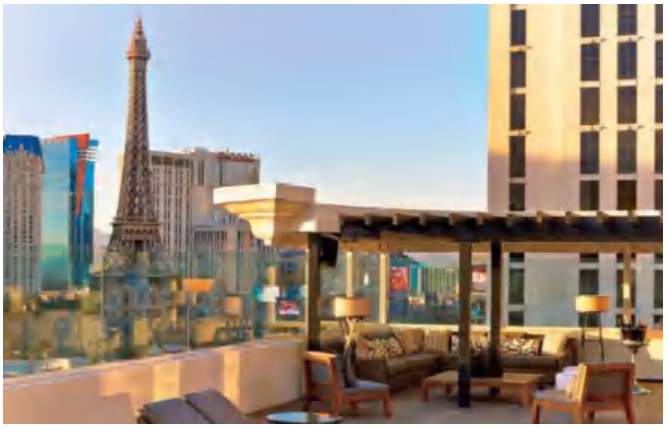
THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: RICHARD GREEN/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; IAN DAGNALL/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; HELENE ROCHE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO. OPPOSITE PAGE, IMAGES COURTESY CAESARS PALACE, ARIA'S, MIRAGE, MGM GRAND

HIGH-ROLLER SUITES

Where to rest your head if you have more money, or luck, than God.

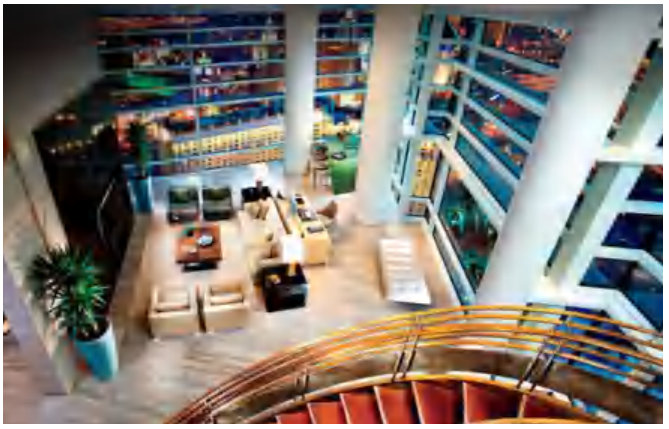
Though every suite has its price, not every one exchanges hands for the night in the kind of straightforward transaction you'd expect from a hotel. Relationships, connections, your line of credit in the casino, the amount of time you play on average, and a fair dose of backroom calculating all go into deciding whether you get to enter the most gilded doors in Las Vegas.

Every casino has its own formula for determining levels of comps, says *Comp City* author Max Rubin. But you're likely only gaining access to the super suites when your credit line—the one you're actively playing—tops $100,000. "If you already bet $2,000 or more on a hand, you know your host, know your casino, know the system, and know that no matter what you do short of murder (sometimes), you're going to get whatever you want for free every time you come to town," he says. "Until you're broke."



The Villas at Caesars Palace caesars.com

In the last few months, Caesars Palace's best villas–such as the 10,300-square-foot David Rockwell Villa atop Nobu Hotel within Caesars (think in-room Nobu chefs at your disposal, a private Zen garden, sauna, and media room) or the 11,200-square-foot Titus Villa, with its onyx tub and golden fixtures, private pool, barrel-vaulted ceilings, and piano room–have slowly opened up as part of the Anthology Collection.



Aria's Sky Villas ariaskysuites.com

Aria's has historically been open by invitation only, but with the right connections, anything is possible. The villas feature panoramic windows with views on the strip, and since last summer they now have their own pool. These modern, high-tech suites range from 1,050 square feet for a one-bedroom suite to 2,060 square feet for the two-bedroom penthouse. Both are perfect for in-room entertainment.

The Villas at the Mirage mgmresorts.com/mirage/thevillas

MGM has other villas many people never see, from the Villas at the Mirage to the Bellagio Chairman and Presidential suites atop Bellagio's Spa Tower: 4,075-square-foot suites with their own indoor gardens and fountains. The good news for those who would rather pay a room rate than lose the equivalent several times over is that some of the city's historically invitation-only spaces are coming online for those willing to pony up for them.

The Mansion at MGM Grand mgmgrand.com

The Mansion at MGM Grand, a collection of 29 astoundingly luxurious villas on the Strip, range in size from 2,400 to 9,000 square feet, some including private indoor pools—and are perhaps the worst-kept secret on the Strip. However, all bets are off when it comes to special occasions like a major fight or a holiday. On big nights like New Year's Eve, chances are slim.

RESTAURANTS

Where to eat.

Yardbird Southern Table & Bar runchickenrun.com

It's not dinner at Yardbird Southern Table & Bar—it's supper. Fried chicken, biscuits, watermelon, deviled eggs, and shrimp and grits served up family-style bring a more casual flair to the Venetian. Maple-glazed bacon doughnuts, a daily quiche, and chocolate-chip pancakes with banana compote, bourbon maple syrup, and peanut butter (an ode to Elvis) make up the brunch menu served Fridays through Sundays. Bourbon, naturally, is a must-order. Frequent diners may even want to snag one of the bourbon lockers in the private dining room to score deals on liquors that can await a return visit.

Joël Robuchon joel-robuchon.com

It's hard to believe that this restaurant is just steps off the casino floor of the MGM Grand. It's almost like walking into the dining room of a private mansion, but it's actually the only restaurant in the Western Hemisphere from acclaimed French chef Joël Robuchon.

Tao Asian Bistro taolasvegas.com

Patrons are sure to spot a celebrity dining beneath the massive Buddha that oversees Tao Asian Bistro. The Chinese, Japanese, and Thai influences sway toward dishes such as sushi, sea bass satay, crispy "snapper in the sand," and imperial Wagyu sirloin.

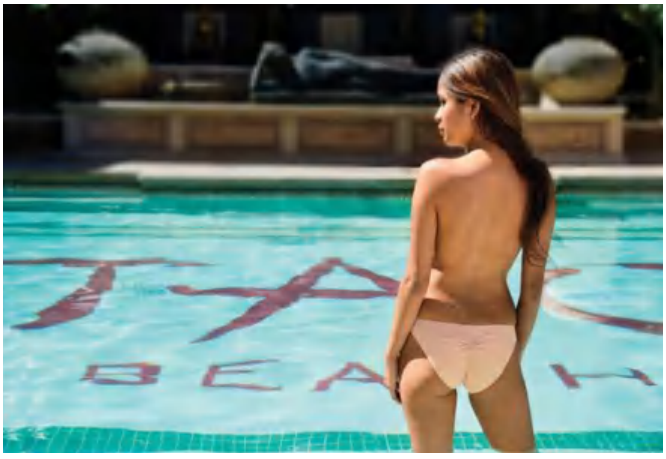
IMAGES COURTESY OF YARDBIRD SOUTHERN TABLE & BAR, JOËL ROBUCHON, TAO ASIAN BISTRO. OPPOSITE PAGE: IMAGES COURTESY OF GHOSTBAR DAYCLUB, TAO BEACH, MARQUEE DAYCLUB

DAY CLUBS

Where to party while the sun's still out.

Ghostbar Dayclub palms.com/nightlife/ghostbar

Every Saturday in the winter, right until the outdoor pools open in March, GBDC (otherwise known as Ghostbar Dayclub) opens in the Palms, because, public servants that they are, "the day-drinking audience needs a new home base during the winter months," says Palms marketing director Melanie DeLillo. You won't find Wagyu meatballs at this party, which starts at 1 p.m., but you'll likely find a bedazzled pink shopping cart filled with McDonald's cheeseburgers, pushed by kindhearted go-go dancers who wouldn't want you to end your flabongo race on an empty stomach.



Tao Beach taolasvegas.com/Tao-Beach

Sitting atop Tao Asian Bistro and Nightclub, Tao Beach was the first daytime pool party in Vegas. There wasn't anything like it in 2007 when the 18,000-square-foot club first opened. Now entering its ninth season, Tao Beach features a 30-foot bar and air-conditioned cabanas.

Marquee Dayclub marqueelasvegas.com/dayclub

Nearly 2,000 revelers are as barely clad as usual, drinking in the grand cabanas, playing blackjack at the "outdoor" gaming tables, and frolicking in the heated pool to DJs and performers.

PRIVATE GAMBLING

Where to roll the dice when the crowds are just too much.

Ever wonder how to get all those comps you hear about in Vegas—the private jets, the big-fight tickets, the bottle service at clubs whose lines part like the Red Sea for Moses? Steve Cyr, the notorious freelance gaming host turned VP of player development at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, can tell you. It's simple: "Play like Larry Flynt." Cyr's ideal customer would be one who's addicted to the thrill of gambling, or at least has enough money to treat mind-blowing amounts of money as recreational losses. Among his current estimated 70 high rollers (those who will play with a weekend minimum of $100,000) and 20 whales (between $500,000 and $3 million) are, "Larry, a couple of generals from outside the United States, and dot-commers."

To those who love the glamour of the big comp, it's the recreational aspect of gambling that's key. Gamers are assigned a "comp worth," determined by their betting average.

The bottom line for gaming experts is that the only way to truly enjoy the world's wildest comps is to get on board with the fact that they inevitably accompany big losses. Anthony Curtis, one of the most consulted Vegas experts in the world, breaks it down this way, "There's a gamut of comping. The first thing you want to do is sign up for a player card"—the only way casinos can actually begin to evaluate your play. Hosts will analyze your player-worthiness, Curtis says. "Generally speaking, you're not analyzed by your results but on your theoretical value. Losers often get more comps."

Bobby's Room at the Bellagio

bellagio.com/en/casino/bobbys-room.html

Bobby's Room (named after Bobby Baldwin) at the Bellagio is another favorite—it's an exclusive room with just two tables and a lot of privacy.

Talon Club at the Cosmopolitan

cosmopolitanoflasvegas.com

At the Cosmopolitan's high-stakes modernized gentleman's speakeasy, the Talon Club, you can shell out $3,400 for a shot from a bottle of the Balvenie Fifty; new baccarat and roulette games, soon to be installed, will add to the glam factor.

Ivey Room at Aria Resort & Casino aria.com

For those who are in it for the glamour, there are a few places they'll automatically head. Poker players find that some of the biggest high-stakes games in the world run regularly out of the sleek, modern Ivey Room at Aria Resort & Casino (named for Phil Ivey, who has won 10 World Series of Poker bracelets and a World Poker Tour title, among other things).

IMAGES COURTESY OF BELLAGIO, THE COSMOPOLITAN, ARIA

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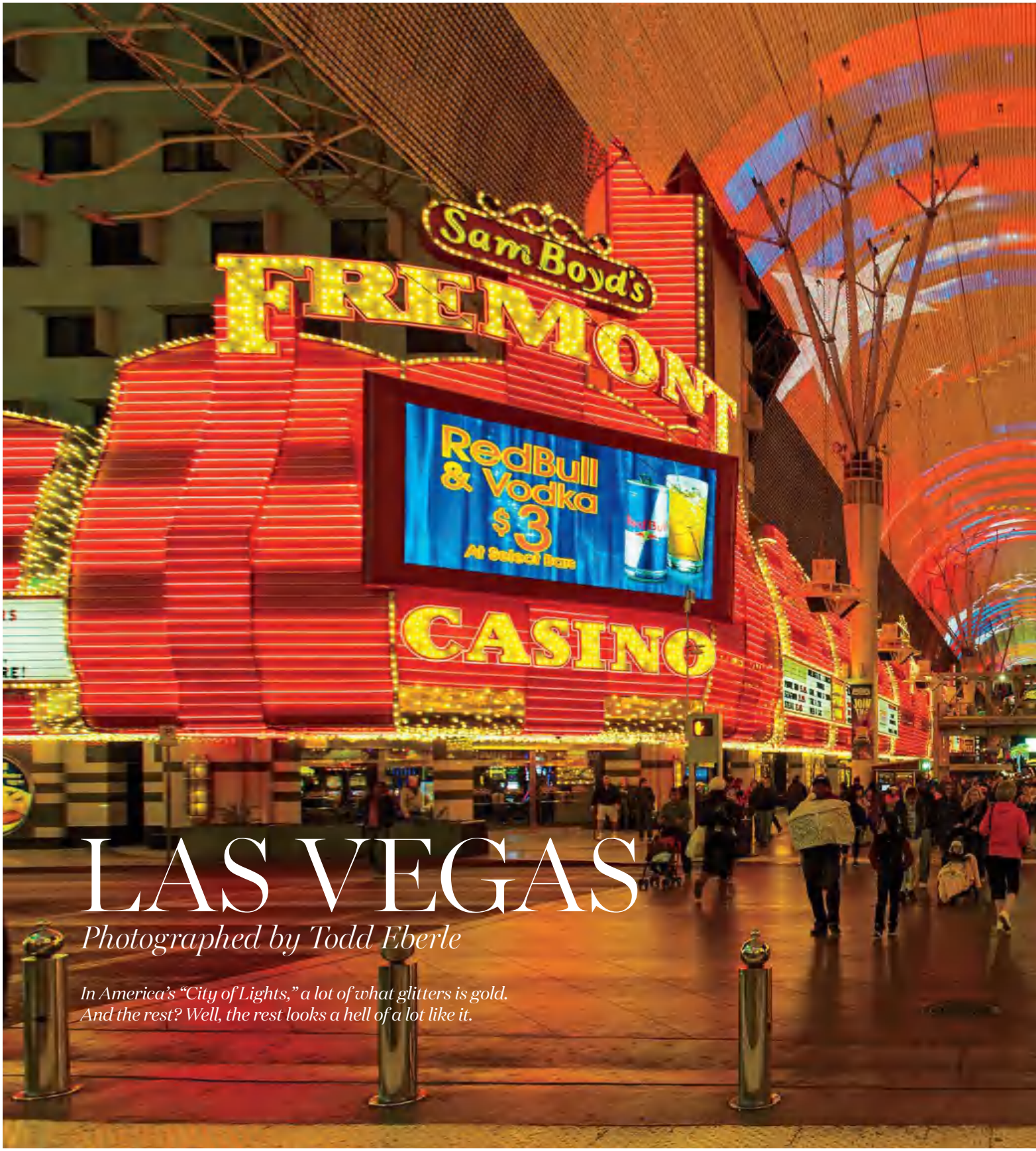


LAS VEGAS

Photographed by Todd Eberle

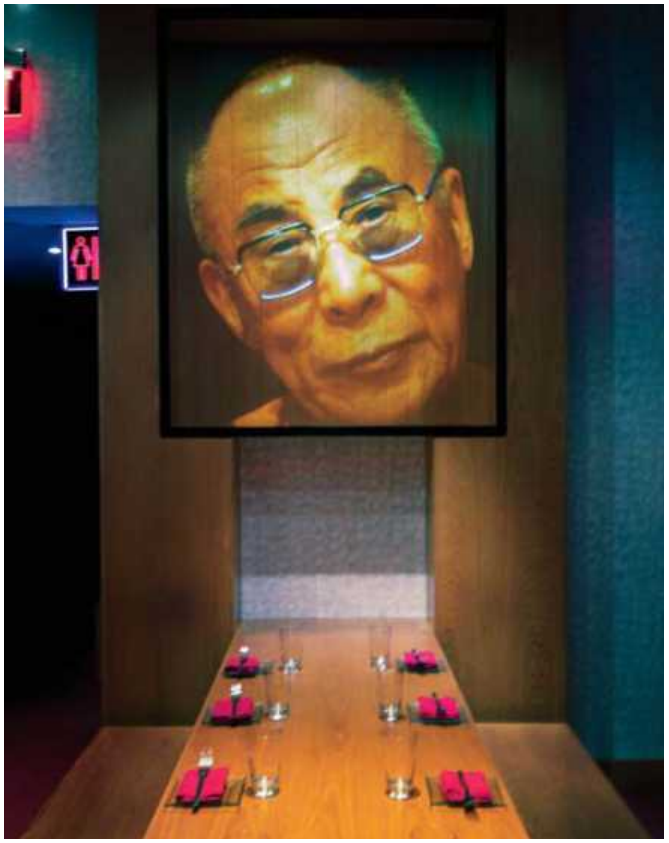
In America's "City of Lights," a lot of what glitters is gold. And the rest? Well, the rest looks a hell of a lot like it.

The Fremont Street Experience.

Picasso exhibit at the Bellagio.

Binion's Gambling Hall at the Fremont Street Experience.

David *and an ATM at Caesars Palace.*



The Dalai Lama, one of several cultural provocateurs, at the Cosmopolitan's China Poblano.

Jeff Koons' Popeye *being watched at Wynn Las Vegas. Wynn bought the work in May 2014 for $28 million.*

Hakkasan nightclub at MGM Grand Hotel & Casino.

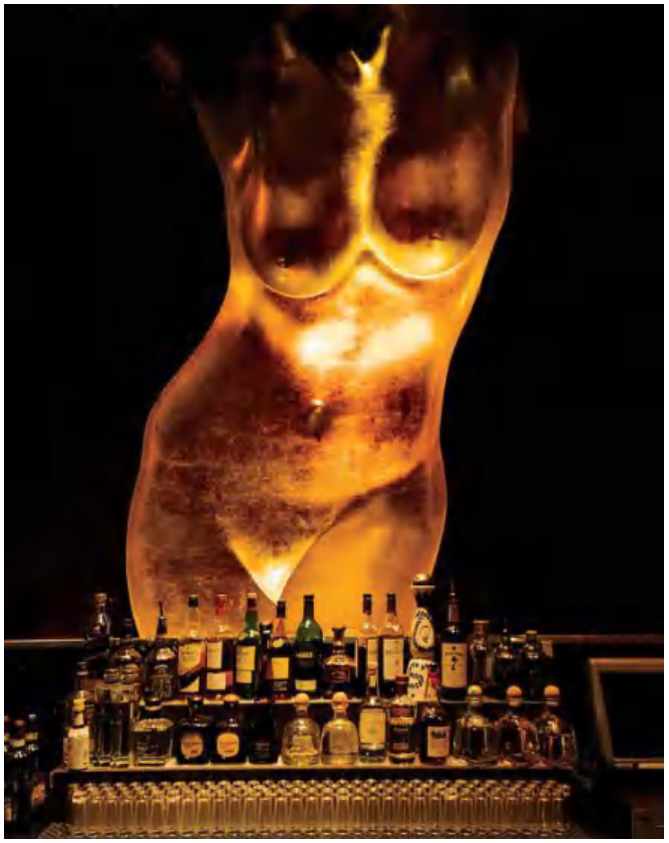
A truck outside Daniel Libeskind's the Shops at Crystals, Aria Las Vegas.

The ShowStoppers performance at Wynn Las Vegas.

Portrait of Frank, a longtime friend of Steve Wynn, at Encore's restaurant Sinatra.

A wheelchair at Wynn Las Vegas.

The Cosmopolitan's high-limit gaming lounge, the Talon Club.



Detail of the bar at Encore's XS nightclub.

A warning at Wynn Las Vegas.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

The stunning portraits of Bjarke Johansen and Simon Rasmussen's 100 Great Danes *celebrate Scandinavia's sexiest women.*

Photographed by BJARKE JOHANSEN

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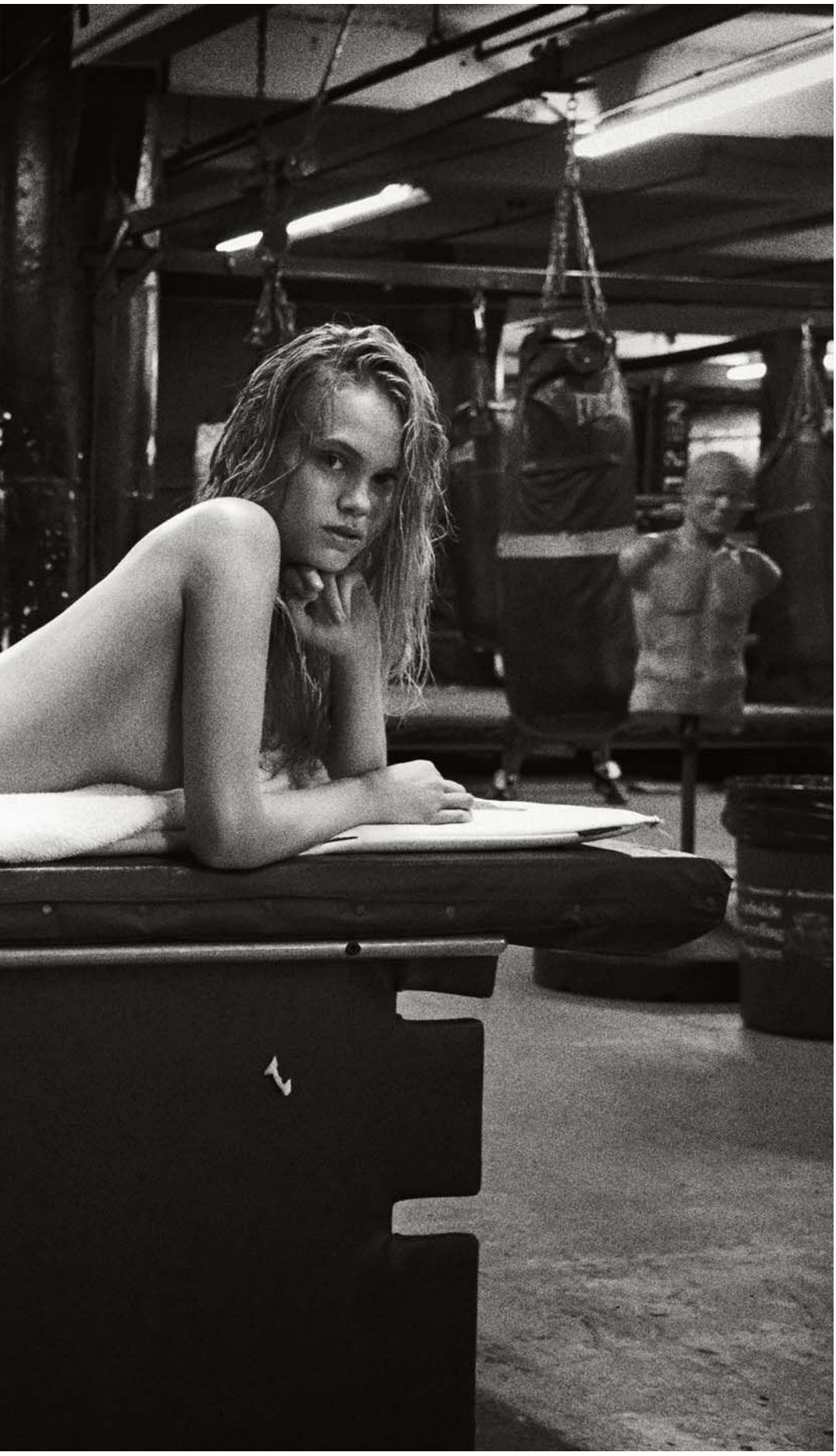
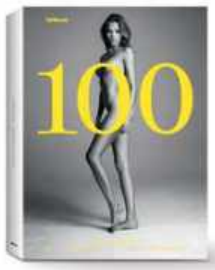
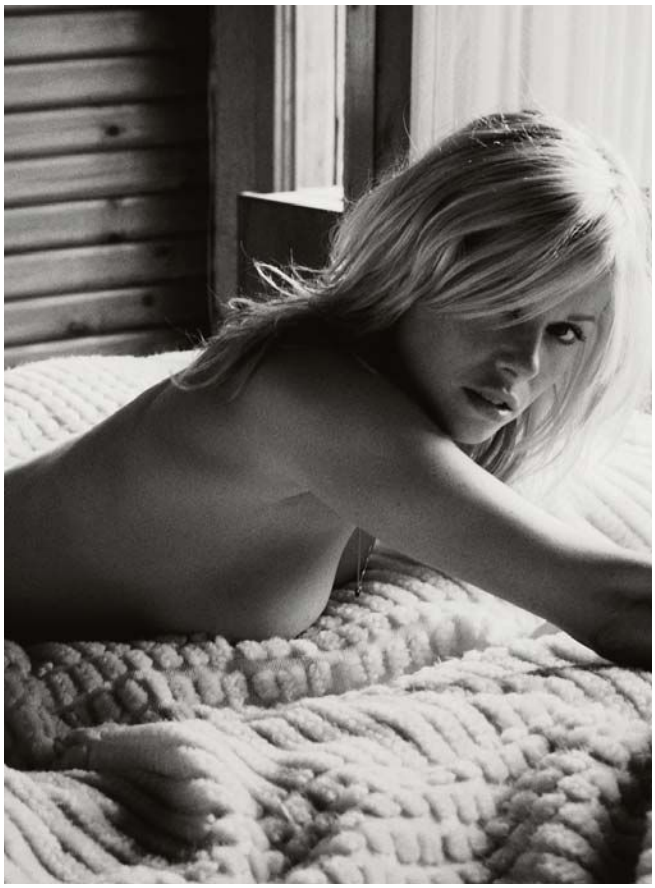


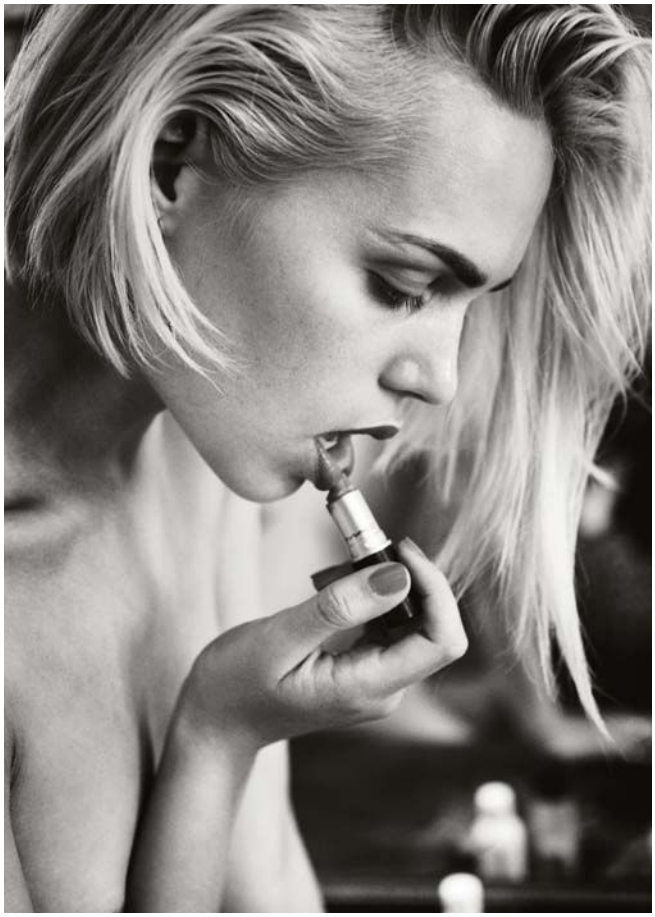
2015 BJARKE JOHANSEN PHOTOGRAPHY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Shot on the rooftops of crowded city apartment blocks, in studios, and on secluded, sandy beaches; in boxing gyms and bareback on a white horse with the craggy peaks of snow-tipped mountains as backdrop; in cars, on beds, and in leafy, green yards, *100 Great Danes* (teNeues, $125) is a titillating tribute to the women of Denmark. Inspired by the undeniable force and effortless beauty of the supermodel portraiture that characterized the '90s (think Peter Lindbergh's generation-defining photographs of beauties Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell, and Kate Moss), photographer Bjarke Johansen and creative director Simon Rasmussen's black-and-white nude portraits celebrate the strength and spirit of the women of their native country. Seven years in the making, the book features women like Nina Agdal and Josephine Skriver, who span the spectrum from models and actresses to artists, singers, and students. Flights to Denmark: booked.



100 Great Danes *by Bjarke Johansen and Simon Rasmussen, published by teNeues, $125; also available as Collector's Edition; teneues.com.*





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Lt. Col. Brown with the Airborne Battalion of the Salvadoran Army, carrying a custom-built sniper rifle, in 1984.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILLIP GONZALES

Mail-Order Mercenaries

Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Brown and his magazine, Soldier of Fortune, *have long had the Second Amendment in sight.*

Text by LUKAS I. ALPERT

After missing his 23rd straight shot, Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Brown is ready to call it a day.

"Fuck me—I've had enough," the founder of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine growls as he puts his brand-new Ruger Precision Rifle down on the table. "I definitely didn't win any prizes today."

Brown has been aiming for a 6-by-10-foot painted metal silhouette of a white buffalo 1,123 yards away—a distance greater than the length of 11 football fields—but keeps circling around the target as the wind shifts.

As he adjusts the brim of his red-and-black SOLDIER OF FORTUNE baseball cap forward on his bald head and gets to his feet, he turns to the motley crew of about a dozen old Army buddies, ex-CIA spooks, magazine contributors, and a few fans who have joined him for a weekend of shooting at the Whittington Center, a National Rifle Association–owned gun range in northern New Mexico where Brown serves as a trustee.

"Anyone else want to try this?"

One by one, members of the group take turns aiming at the white buffalo, almost all of them hitting the target in the first few shots.

"Hey, Bob, you're the only trustee who hasn't hit it yet," one of his pals jokes.

"Any other comments, gentlemen?" Brown says.

"You want polite ones?"

"Just keep it to yourself, then."

At 83 years old, the colonel seems like a feisty grandfather at first, wearing Ambervision glasses, temporary braces on both knees, white socks pulled halfway up his calves, and hearing aids from years of being around loud, high-powered weaponry. But he is not a man to be messed with. By his count, he has seen action in more than a dozen conflicts around the world and been shot at more times than he can remember. With a pistol strapped to his belt whose custom grip is emblazoned with a U.S. flag and a bald eagle, Brown continues to work full-time from his home in Boulder, Colorado, publishing the magazine that celebrated its 40th anniversary late last year.

"Boulder is 25 square miles of hippy-dippy bullshit surrounded by reality. I come down here to cleanse my soul," Brown tells me, the words coming out of his mouth in bursts like machine-gun fire. "You know what they say about the golden years? It's bullshit."

Dubbed "the Journal of Professional Adventurers," *Soldier of Fortune* has, since 1975, chronicled a shifting, no-holds-barred world of black ops and mercenaries fighting Communism and terrorism. Its reporters have operated unlike most, carrying guns along with their pens and cameras, writing first-person accounts from battlefields around the world in what Brown likes to call "hard-core participatory journalism."

"We would create the story, gin up a lot of action, and then write about it for the glistening pages of our bad-boy magazine," is how he described it in his 2013 memoir, *I Am Soldier of Fortune: Dancing with Devils.*

In many cases, its writers really were mercenaries, and six *Soldier of Fortune* correspondents have been killed in action over the years, in places like Angola, Nicaragua, Burma (now Myanmar), and Sierra Leone (where legend has it that the remains of reporter Robert C. MacKenzie were eaten by rebel fighters).

The small weekend gathering at Whittington has effectively replaced the annual *Soldier of Fortune* conventions Brown held for two decades that used to draw hundreds of camouflage-clad war buffs to the desert for displays of military firepower, weapons, tactical training, and apparently quite a lot of drinking. Brown says the showcase demanded more manpower than his downsized magazine could staff, so he pulled the plug a few years back in favor of just spending time with his close friends.

Several members of his entourage have traveled hundreds, even thousands of miles to join the colonel for the weekend. Some he has known

The December 1982 issue

Ads from Soldier of Fortune *circa the 1980s ran the gamut from (clockwise from top) an armed-pinup poster and mail-order blowguns to mercenary classifieds and calls to fight in Afghanistan.*

FOR 40 YEARS, BROWN HAS SERVED AS AN INSPIRATIONAL FIGURE FOR A PARTICULAR BRAND OF MISFIT, WHETHER THEY WERE FIGHTING FOR A CAUSE OR A PRICE OR JUST SEEKING A BIT OF ADVENTURE IN VARIOUS HOT SPOTS AROUND THE WORLD.

since his days in Special Forces in Vietnam, and others he has met on a variety of battlefields along the way.

"The vast majority of the people I have been close to have had some involvement, in one way or another, with the magazine. Some of them have been with me in the shit, others I know because they have written for us, and then there are guys I've met in fighting for gun rights," he says. "They are an eclectic group."

While many of them have also known each other for years, the linchpin of the get-together is undeniably the colonel—often referred to as RKB or Maximus by friends. His colorful personality commands attention and brings out a mixture of awe, respect, and genuine affection among the gang of pretty gruff guys.

Perhaps the oldest pal in the group is Robert Bernard, the Army medic who saved Brown's life back in 1969 when he was seriously wounded in a mortar attack in the central highlands of Vietnam. Known as "Bac si" to his friends (which means "doctor" in Vietnamese), the soft-spoken Bernard still keeps a close eye on the colonel's health.

"He hasn't always taken the best care of himself, so somebody has to look after him," the 77-year-old tells me. "He was the kind of guy you wanted as your CO in Vietnam—he really stuck his neck out for the people he was in charge of—and he is the kind of guy you want to have as your friend in life. Never a dull moment with him."

It was for guys like Bernard and his generation that Brown initially created *Soldier of Fortune.* When he launched the magazine, he had hoped to give something to the Vietnam vets who were coming home and finding themselves spat at and being called baby killers by antiwar peaceniks.

"A lot of Vietnam veterans felt they weren't given their due, so I wanted to promote the concept of giving them recognition. We said our blood was just as red as anyone who fought in WWI or WWII or Korea, but that wasn't the case in society at the time," Brown says.

Later the readership expanded to include a broader swath of military buffs, hard-core cold warriors, and a fair share of young men who would later join the armed forces inspired by the blood-and-guts tales of patriotic derring-do they had read in its pages.

"It was reading *Soldier of Fortune* as a teenager that inspired me to join the Army. There are a lot of guys who will tell you that," says Jerry Kraus, a 50-year-old insurance agent and *Soldier of Fortune* field editor from Colorado who has become the colonel's right-hand man of sorts and drove down from Boulder with him for the weekend.

Brown says one of his most cherished mementos is a signed copy of Chris Kyle's *American Sniper,* in which the marksman (who was killed in 2013) thanks Brown in the dedication for inspiring him to join the military.

But the troubles faced by print publishers as readers increasingly move online, plus the question of how to keep a magazine relevant that was born in the days of the Cold War and is geared largely toward men who have long been collecting social security, have begun to weigh on Brown.

"Obviously we are nowhere near where we were during our heyday in the 1980s, but we bring in a little coin and cover costs," he says. Still, Brown now finds himself having to do much more of the work, as he is down to just an associate, two part-time editors, and a contract art director from a peak of about 50 employees in the early 1980s.

That has made it hard for him to get out into the world and do what he loves to do most—fight.

"You know, I just don't have the time. We used to have a lot of people running the place. It's hard to do all this with just a few people and still have the time to get out there. I may try to go to Ukraine or Kurdistan soon. I still have good contacts in both places," he says.

Despite the fundamental role *Soldier of Fortune* has played in his life ("it's as much an ex-

tension of me as *Playboy* is for the guy who walks around in his pajamas all the time"), Brown says he has been negotiating to either bring in younger partners or even sell the magazine altogether.

For 40 years, Brown has served as an inspirational figure for a particular brand of misfit, whether they were fighting for a cause or a price or just seeking a bit of adventure in various hot spots around the world. But as time passed and the world changed, the colonel is the first to admit that the magazine's hard-charging ethos may not have the same impact today.

"Vietnam veterans have gotten older and settled down. Some have died. The Rambo era—whatever that amorphous phase was—is no longer. Who knows what it was, but there was something there. Of course, the Cold War is over and granted we have the War on Terrorism, but it is not the same thing," he says. "We never would be able to do now what we were able to do back then."

In its early years, *Soldier of Fortune* regularly ran full-page recruitment ads for mercenaries willing to fight with the white supremacist government of Rhodesia against Communist-backed black guerrillas. That led some members of Congress to call for the magazine to be investigated for possibly violating the Neutrality Act (the magazine was ultimately cleared of any wrongdoing).

Editorially, the magazine focused heavily on war stories and first-person dispatches, with correspondents jetting off to fight in and write about wars in the far corners of the globe. Issues in the 1970s featured regular reports on the situation in places like Rhodesia and Angola. As the 1980s rolled around, the focus moved to Central America's bloody wars and the fight between the Mujahideen and the Soviet army in Afghanistan. In the 1990s, the focus became increasingly domestic, with an onslaught of pro–Second Amendment articles critical of the Clinton administration and its gun control efforts. The next decade the magazine turned to tales from the War on Terror and on efforts to control America's borders.

While it is unflinchingly pro-military and pro-police, the magazine is also deeply suspicious of government overreach, which has also made it popular among antigovernment types (Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh was a subscriber).

The magazine continues to focus on similar themes, but battlefield articles are now less often written by the ragtag group of fighter-journalists that set the magazine apart years ago. The June issue had a long feature story on South African mercenaries ("meres" in *Soldier of Fortune* lingo) who were going to Nigeria to fight the radical Islamist fighters of Boko Haram, but the piece was reprinted from a website that publishes academic articles. A first-person account of embedding with Kurdish Peshmerga fighters battling ISIS in Iraq was similarly reprinted from a conservative political website.

At its height, the magazine sold around 150,000 copies on newsstands each month (the biggest seller, at 182,000 copies, was the June 1985 issue, whose cover featured a shot of a shirtless Sylvester Stallone firing an M60 machine gun from the film *Rambo: First Blood Part II*). Sales have varied widely over the years, usually seeing spikes when the U.S. got into a war. Brown says it was always difficult to have an accurate sense of how many people read the magazine, because a single copy might get passed around within an entire platoon. He declines to discuss the current circulation, and the magazine isn't independently audited. He acknowledges being "technologically illiterate" but says he has been getting help improving *Soldier of Fortune*'s antiquated website and presence on social media.

"My lady friend is the one who has the better knowledge of what goes on on Facebook and the website. We had a lot of bad experiences with people helping us try to build the website, and all of them turned out to either be inferior or incompetent," he says. "We have been growing online. On Facebook we now have more than 850,000 likes."

Licensing has also proved lucrative over the years, with the magazine's name being used for a successful video-game series, a short-lived television show, and a number of military-themed novels.

Perhaps the clearest change has been the advertising.

At the beginning, *Soldier of Fortune* featured scores of classified listings for itinerant guns-for-hire. Ads like "Ex-Marine seeks employment as mercenary, full-time or job contract. Prefer South or Central America but all offers considered" were commonplace. In the 1980s and early '90s, the magazine spent years battling several multimillion-dollar lawsuits brought by families of people targeted or killed by hit men who had been hired through its pages. All were either settled or had their huge jury awards overturned on appeal.

"They really tried the magazine, not the cases. Two guys meet through the magazine, they have a friendly relationship for six months, they don't talk about anything illegal. But then six months later, they agree to commit this horrendous crime. Well, if they meet in a bar and six months later they say, 'Let's rob a bank,' should the bartender be held liable? It was total crap," he says.

Regardless, the magazine stopped taking those kinds of ads in 1985. But its classifieds continued to offer everything from throwing stars and nunchuks to posters of G. Gordon Liddy holding an Uzi. Ads now tend to be more like what one might expect in any gun magazine, marketing handguns, rifles, hunting apparel, and gun accessories. In the early 1980s, the magazine regularly topped 110 pages. By the mid-2000s, it had dropped to 82. In recent years, the number has dwindled to 64.

"THE MAGAZINE IS BOB, AND BOB IS THE MAGAZINE. IT WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME WITHOUT HIM."

"This has never been just a moneymaking venture for me," Brown says. "If it had been, I would have made a lot more."

Over the years, the colonel routinely sank his largesse back into financing whatever mission the magazine had embarked on. He says he personally spent more than $300,000 backing efforts to hunt for POWs he and many of his readers believed had been left behind after the Vietnam War. "And that was 30 years ago," he notes. The magazine regularly advertised big-ticket rewards to anyone willing to turn over proof that the Vietnamese had used chemical weapons or to Nicaraguan pilots ready to hand over an intact Soviet-built helicopter.

It also helped raise money for the Mujahideen fighters that years later morphed into the Taliban and helped give rise to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. Brown has said that based on the information he had at the time, he felt he had made the right decision.

Even if the magazine no longer has the cultural reach it once did, Brown's friends worry about the colonel no longer being involved.

"The magazine is Bob, and Bob is the magazine. It would never be the same without him," says Gordon Hutchinson, a firearms instructor and author from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who has known the colonel for a decade. "We would never be the same without him. We can't have that."

After a long day of shooting long-range rifles, shotguns, semiautomatic weapons, and a Civil War–era, muzzle-loaded sniper rifle called "the heavy," the colonel suggests the group drive 30 miles to Cimarron, New Mexico, to have dinner at the 144-year-old St. James Hotel. Steeped in Wild West history, the hotel was once a regular stop-off point for outlaws like Jesse James and lawman Wyatt Earp.

To those who don't know him well, it's easy to assume Brown is a posturing octogenarian who never outgrew an adolescent obsession with big toys that go boom. But as he holds court at the dining table, he reveals a more subtly charismatic side, flirting innocently with the waitress and hostess and commanding the attention of all those gathered around.

"Bob is one of those guys who, when he walks into a room, everyone kind of turns around. He'll doff his cap to a lady. He's almost European in his courtliness and manners, like a real officer and a gentleman," Hutchinson says. "You don't meet a ton of people like that."

Brown is deeply conservative but says he generally doesn't like talking politics, although when the topic of Republican front-runner Donald Trump comes up, he is quick to voice his opinion.

"Trump is a fucking nightmare, and I think it'll be terrible if he slips in. I just fear he is going to pull a Ross Perot on us and run as a third-party candidate, which will just hand it to [Hillary] Clinton. That would give me a fucking stroke."

In the 1990s, the magazine poured tons of ink into criticizing Bill Clinton, featuring a regular column called "Slick Willie Watch."

At one point in the evening, the colonel pulls me aside to make sure I see the bullet holes that pock the tin ceiling of the restaurant's saloon, the indelible marks of more than a few drunken Old West gun fights.

"Hard to find that kind of living history," he says. "I don't really drink anymore. Believe me, I've done enough drinking for a lifetime as it is." Still, the colonel has made a point of leaving his sidearm in the car.

Brown tells me he has been married and has kids from whom he is estranged, but that he doesn't want to talk about them. "I'm just not going there."

When the colonel goes to pay his tab he discovers that it, along with the dinner bills of several of the old-timers in the group, has already been paid by Bruce Roberts, a fan of the magazine from North Dakota. A security guard for a gas facility with an uncanny resemblance to the country musician Charlie Daniels, Roberts had never met Brown before this weekend but hit it off with him when they corresponded over the purchase of a military history book from his collection.

"It's just an honor to be around him. He's really a legend. I read the magazine going back to when I was a teenager, and I feel like I know all these guys. It's amazing to meet them," he says.

After the party breaks up, Brown comes back to my car to retrieve his gun, as he plans to ride back with someone else. As he walks off, Brown puts his arm around the shoulders of Harry Claflin, a longtime pal who spent many years in the 1980s training government troops in El Salvador in their war against Communist rebels.

"It Ain't Like It Used To Be, But It'll Do ..."

Brown (right, on horse) in Soldier of Fortune, *with the team of vets who trained the Contras' special ops unit.*

"Thanks, buddy, for coming out for a good time—there won't be many more of these. You know, life's a bitch and then you die."

The next morning, Brown tries to get everyone together for a group photo before shooting a round of trap.

"It's like fucking herding cats!" he yells as the group mills about.

Once everyone lines up with their shotguns, Brown suggests they hold up a shell in their free hand in a way that makes it look like they're flipping the bird to the camera.

"That's right. The Wild Bunch rides again," he says, referring to the classic 1969 Western that is his favorite film.

Brown, who has sat on the NRA's board of directors for three decades, then departs for a business meeting.

"You boys are on your own. Have fun shooting."

Brown says he came up with the idea for the magazine while traveling in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) when it was under white-government rule and was enlisting mercenaries to fight Communist-backed guerrilla forces.

He was told several of the fighters were headed to Oman after their tours to put down an insurrection. Out of curiosity, Brown wrote to Oman's ministry of defense, which sent him a contract. Rather than sign up, Brown took out ads in gun magazines: "Want to be a mercenary in the Middle East? Send $5." In return, he'd send the contract.

"I got scores of replies," Brown says. "*Newsweek* spotted this and did an article on my ad, and it just went through the roof. I was getting replies from people in Bangladesh, Greece: 'I was in the army in Turkey for five years; I want to be a mercenary.' I realized I was onto something."

With the money, *Soldier of Fortune* was born.

But it's guys such as Claflin, who worked with the likes of Oliver North in helping fight against Communism in Central America, that have given rise to theories that the magazine's origins might have been less organic. In a 1984 article in *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, leftist firebrand writer Ward Churchill argued that *Soldier of Fortune* was actually an elaborate CIA front geared toward organizing private soldiers to fight the U.S.'s battles in the period after the Vietnam War, when committing American troops abroad was politically problematic. Churchill noted that for years before the magazine launched, Brown regularly found himself in the middle of situations where the CIA played a role. Churchill also pointed to the fact that many of the magazine's writers had long been suspected of ties to the intelligence community. Brown has two words for Churchill's theory: "Utter bullshit."

What's not bullshit is that the necessity for highly trained but underemployed soldiers to advertise their wares or otherwise beat the bushes to find gigs has declined in recent years as the process has become more corporatized. Governments and companies working in troubled parts of the world can now simply turn to big private-security firms, like the company once known as Blackwater, which have rosters of such men at the ready. Additionally, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the market got flooded by scores of well-trained fighters with little to do. That, coupled with the magazine's aging readership, has resulted in an audience that is perhaps more armchair quarterback than active combatant.

Brown has increasingly focused his energy in recent years on the struggle over gun rights, and the magazine has sometimes resembled more of an NRA soapbox than a pure military review. Yet he still tells friends that he has plenty of fight left in him.

"When I last saw the colonel, he told me, 'You know, I think I still have one more good war in me,'" Hutchinson recalls. "I just looked at him and said, 'Bob, are you crazy? You've been in every skirmish, large and small—including some really stupid ones—going back to Korea. Why don't you give it a rest?' But honestly, I think the day he gives it up is the day he dies."

As the weekend festivities wrap up and everyone is preparing for the long trip home, Brown tells me that no matter what happens, he isn't worried.

"You'll always stay relevant as long as you can shoot a gun."

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CREDITS

FAST FRIENDS

P.14-15: (Her) *Overalls,* KSUBI (*); ksubi.com. *Tank,* RAILS (*); railsclothing.com. *Neck scarf* (worn throughout), stylist's own. *Belt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES (*); powerplantchoppers.com. *Silver wrist chain* (worn throughout), UNBOUNDED (*). *Ring* (worn throughout), stylist's own. *Shoes,* TOPSHOP (*); us.topshop.com. (Him) *Top,* MERZ B. SCHWANEN (*); merz-schwanen.com. *Watch,* vintage. *Leather pants,* vintage.

P.17: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE (*); acnestudios.com. *Pants,* BEHATI (*). *Tank,* RAILS (*); rails clothing.com. Below: (Yaniv, second from left) *Glasses,* Yaniv's own. *Boots,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES (*); powerplantchoppers.com. *Jacket,* vintage. *Watch,* vintage MONACO (*). *Bandana (neckerchief),* stylist's own. *T-shirt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES (*); power plantchoppers.com. *Jeans,* LEVI'S (*); levi.com. (Arto, below right) *Jacket,* JOHN VARVATOS (*); johnvarvatos.com. *Jeans,* HUDSON (*); hudsonjeans.com. *T-shirt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES (*); powerplantchoppers.com. *Sunglasses,* RAY-BAN (*); ray-ban.com.

P.18: Clockwise from top left: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE (*); acnestudios.com. (Arto) *Jacket,* JOHN VARVATOS (*); johnvarvatos.com. *Jeans,* HUDSON (*); hudsonjeans.com. *T-shirt,* POWERPLANT MOTORCYCLES (*); powerplantchoppers.com.

P.19: (Orleb) *Shirt,* MERZ B. SCHWANEN (*); merz-schwanen.com. *Hat,* SCHAEFFERS GARMENT HOTEL (*); schaeffersgarmenthotel.com.

P.21: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE (*); acnestudios.com. *Pants,* BEHATI (*). *Tank,* RAILS (*); rails clothing.com. *Boots,* TOPSHOP (*); us.topshop.com. (Him) *Vintage jacket,* SAN DIEGO LEATHER (*); leather.com. *T-shirt,* BEAUTIFUL FUL (*); beautifulful.com. *Jeans,* LEVI'S (*); levi.com. *Shoes,* CHIPPEWA (*); chippewaboots.com. *Sunglasses*, RAY-BAN (*); ray-ban.com.

P.22: (Her) *Jacket,* ACNE (*); acnestudios.com. *Pants,* BEHATI (*). *Tank,* RAILS (*); rails clothing.com.

P.24: (Her) *Gloves,* vintage. *Helmet,* vintage. *Boots,* TOPSHOP (*); us.topshop.com.

SCENTS OF SECURITY

P.32: *The One for Men* DOLCE & GABBANA ($115); *Eternity for Men* CALVIN KLEIN ($76); *Armani Code Profumo* GIORGIO ARMANI ($90); *Day for Night* PRADA ($300); *Guilty Pour Homme* GUCCI ($113).

GENTLEMAN'S SPY CLOSET

P.34: *Coats* (left to right), MACKINTOSH ($800); mackintosh-uk.tumblr.com. CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION (*); calvinklein.com. SALVATORE FERRAGAMO (*); ferragamo.com. ZEGNA (*); zegna.com. PAUL SMITH (*) paulsmith.co.uk. *White shirt,* ZEGNA ($345); zegna.com. *Glasses* (top to bottom) OLIVER PEOPLES (*); oliverpeoples.com. TOM FORD ($460); tomford.com. *Passport cover,* RIMOWA ($225); rimowa.com/en-us. *Umbrella,* SWAINE ADENEY BRIGG ($450); swaineadeneybrigg.com. *Cologne,* TOM FORD (*); tomford.com. *Cigar case,* DAVIDOFF (*); davidoff.com. *Cigar cutter,* S.T. DUPONT ($193); st-dupont.com. *Lighter,* S.T. DUPONT ($283); st-dupont.com. *Bag,* BOTTEGA VENETA (*); bottegaveneta.com/us. *M4 assault rifle,* COLT (*); colt.com. *Shoes (left to right):* SALVATORE FERRAGAMO (*); ferragamo.com. GEORGE CLEVERLEY (*); gjcleverley.co.uk

P.36: *Trench coat,* MACKINTOSH ($1,200); mackintosh-uk.tumblr.com. *Black gun*, WALTHER PPK (*); waltherarms.com. *M1911 black-brown gun,* COLT (*); colt.com. *Lumix dmc-lx100 camera,* PANASONIC ($799); panasonic.com. *Silver line waterproof binoculars,* LEICA ($949); us.leica-camera.com. *Pens,* MONT BLANC Urban Speed ballpoint pen ($450), MONT BLANC Heritage Collection 1912 capless rollerball ($590); montblanc.com. *Dagger,* COLD STEEL Safe Keeper II ($75); coldsteel.com. *Throwing stars,* COLD STEEL ($15) coldsteel.com. *Bridal hide visiting card case,* ETTINGER ($180); ettinger.co.uk. *Grooming kit,* RIMOWA (*); rimowa.com/en-us. *Knife,* COLD STEEL double agent ($49); coldsteel.com. *Tie bar* (left to right), TOM FORD ($290); tomford.com. MONT BLANC ($105); montblanc.com. *Driving gloves,* AUTODROMO ($125); autodromo.com. *Knives* (top to bottom), SCHRADE ($40), SCHRADE viper ($64); taylorbrandsllc.com. *Briefcase,* BOTTEGA VENETA (*); bottegaveneta.com/us

P.37: *Tux jacket,* TOM FORD ($4,260); tomford.com. *Cufflinks (top to bottom),* THOMAS PINK Bulldog ($195); us.thomaspink.com. DUNHILL gyro square carbon fiber ($320) and ball bearing carbon fiber cufflinks ($370); dunhill.com. ETTINGER round sterling and black leather ($90); ettinger.co.uk. DUNHILL gyro square white mother of pearl ($320); dunhill.com. MONT BLANC iconic cufflinks ($290); montblanc.com. DUNHILL Avorities ($180); dunhill.com. ETTINGER sterling and red leather bar ($90); ettinger.co.uk. THOMAS PINK pebble ($60); us.thomaspink.com. *Sunglasses* (top to bottom), RALPH LAUREN aluminum driving sunglasses ($219); ralphlauren.com. BOTTEGA VENETA (*); bottegaveneta.com. RALPH LAUREN aluminum driving sunglasses ($219); ralphlauren.com. TOM FORD square optical frame ($460); tomford.com. OLIVER PEOPLES (*); oliverpeoples.com. *Watches* (left to right), OMEGA De Ville Tresor ($13,800) and De Ville Prestige ($3,600); omegawatches.com. SEIKO (*); seikousa.com. BELL & ROSS (*); bellross.com/us. OMEGA Dark Side of the Moon ($12,000); omegawatches.com. SAMSUNG Gear S2 ($349); samsung.com. *Watches* (left to right), OMEGA James Bond Limited Edition Seamaster Aqua Terra ($7,350); omegawatches.com. TAG HEUER Connected ($1,500); us.tagheuer.com. SUUNTO Kailash ($950); suunto.com. *Wallet,* DUNHILL Chassis 8cc billfold ($315); dunhill.com. *Flask,* J.W. HULME stainless leather covered flask ($125); jwhulmeco.com. *Gold pocket watch chain,* TOM FORD ($1,490); tomford.com. *Umbrella,* ZEGNA ($345); zegna.com. *Driving gloves,* AUTODROMO ($125); autodromo.com. *Collapsible baton,* SCHRADE ($20); taylorbrandsllc.com. *Ties* (left to right), THOMAS PINK ($135); us.thomaspink.com. CALVIN KLEIN both ties ($65); calvinklein.com. THOMAS PINK ($135); us.thomaspink.com. CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION ($135); calvinklein.com. BOTTEGA VENETTA ($210); bottegaveneta.com/us. *Shoes* (left to right), SALVATORE FERRAGAMO (*); ferragamo.com. GEORGE CLEVERLEY (*); gjcleverley.co.uk. BALLY (*); bally.com.

P.38: *Silk scarf* BOTTEGA VENETA (*); bottegaveneta.com/us. *Sunglasses* (top to bottom), OLIVER PEOPLES (*); oliverpeoples.com. BOTTEGA VENETA (*); bottegaveneta.com/us. AUTODROMO Stelvio ($325); autodromo.com. OLIVER PEOPLES (*); oliverpeoples.com. *Bow ties,* BALLY both bow ties ($95); bally.com. BRIONI (*); brioni.com. *Flask,* J.W. HULME ($125); jwhulmeco.com. *Backpack,* LOUIS VUITTON Arsene ($5,000); louisvuitton.com. *Ties,* TOM FORD (*); tomford.com. *Cigar case,* GHURKA twin cigar case ($215); ghurka.com. *Folding knives,* COLD STEEL Code 4 ($135) and Recon 1 ($169); coldsteel.com. *Handgun,* SIG SAUER p229 (*); sigsauer.com. *Sword cane,* COLD STEEL ($240); coldsteel.com. *Coat,* BRIONI (*); brioni.com. *Shirts* (left to right), TOM FORD ($615); tomford.com. THOMAS PINK ($195); us.thomaspink.com. *Bag*, BOTTEGA VENETTA (*); bottegaveneta.com/us. *Belts,* PAUL SMITH (*); paulsmith.co.uk. *Shoes* (left to right), GEORGE CLEVERLEY (*); gjcleverley.co.uk. SALVATORE FERRAGAMO (*); ferragamo.com

P.40: *Watch,* BREITLING Emergency titanium case, intrepid orange dial, titanium bracelet ($16,475); breitling.com.

MR. PECK

P.42: *Shirt and pants,* SALVATORE FERRAGAMO ($410, $513); ferragamo.com.

P.44: *Blazer, trouser and polo,* EMPORIO ARMANI ($1,125, $675, $675); armani.com.

P.45: *Sweater,* SALVATORE FERRAGAMO ($912); ferragamo.com. *Pants (suit),* HUGO BOSS ($2,095); hugoboss.com.

P.46-47: *Watch,* OMEGA ($10,600.00); omegawatches.com. *Suit,* MICHAEL KORS ($795); michaelkors.com. *Sweater and sunglasses,* SALVATORE FERRAGAMO ($625, $396); ferragamo.com.

P.48: *Suit and tank,* CALVIN KLEIN ($676, $39.50); calvinklein.com. *Pocket square,* stylist's own.

P.49: *Suit,* SALVATORE FERRAGAMO ($1,341); ferragamo.com. *Tank,* CALVIN KLEIN ($39.50); calvinklein.com.

VEGAS BABY

P.55: *Bodice,* DSQUARED2 (*); dsquared2.com/us. *Thong,* VICTORIA'S SECRET ($14.50); victoriassecret.com. *Shoes,* GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI ($795); giuseppezanottidesign.com. *Fur coat,* POLOGEORGIS ($6,995); pologeorgis.com.

P.56: *Cape,* NAEEM KHAN ($3,990); naeemkhan.com. *Bodysuit,* VICTORIA'S SECRET ($58); victoriassecret.com. *Necklace,* ERICKSON BEAMON ($1,093); ericksonbeamon.com. *Bracelets,* MITCHEL PRIMROSE ($995); mitchelprimrose.com. *Shoes,* DSQUARED2 ($2,140); dsquared2.com/us.

P.57: *Fur coat,* Adrienne Landau ($1,895); adriennelandau.com. *Necklace,* ERICKSON BEAMON ($976.50); ericksonbeamon.com. *Bracelets,* R.J. GRAZIANO ($60, $68); rjgraziano.com.

P.58: *Necklace,* SWAROVSKI ($349); swarovski.com. *Bra, garter & thong,* VICTORIA'S SECRET ($64.50, $25, $14.50); victoriassecret.com. *Shirt,* TOM FORD ($605); tomford.com. *Hosiery,* FALKE ($49); falke.com.

P.60: *Dress,* ALON LIVNÉ ($14,000); alonlivne.com. *Bracelet,* MITCHEL PRIMROSE ($695); mitchelprimrose.com. *Shoes,* TOM FORD ($890); tomford.com.

P.61: *Jumpsuit,* NAEEM KHAN ($6,000); naeemkhan.com. *Bracelet,* MITCHEL PRIMROSE ($695); mitchelprimrose.com. *Mask,* ERICKSON BEAMON ($2,085); ericksonbeamon.com.

P.62-63: *Fur coat,* DENNIS BASSO ($12,500); dennisbasso.com. *Necklace & bracelets,* R.J. GRAZIANO ($75, $60,$68); rjgraziano.com. *Bodysuit,* VICTORIA'S SECRET ($58); victoriassecret.com.

P.65: *Dress,* ALEXANDRE VAUTHIER (price upon request, call +3 314 723 5717 or email mmarcy@alexandrevauthier.com); alexandrevauthier.com.

P.66-67: *Fur coat,* DENNIS BASSO ($12,500); dennisbasso.com. *Shorts,* VERA WANG COLLECTION (*); verawang.com. *Bracelets,* R.J. GRAZIANO ($60, $68); rjgraziano.com. *Shoes,* GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI ($895); giuseppezanottidesign.com. *Hosiery,* FALKE ($49); falke.com.

P.68-69: *Dress,* MARCHESA (*); marchesa.com. *Shoes,* CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN ($1,295); us.christianlouboutin.com.

P.70: *Fur coat,* DENNIS BASSO ($12,500); dennisbasso.com. *Necklace and bracelets,* R.J. GRAZIANO ($75, $60, $68); rjgraziano.com.

P.71: *Dress,* BILL BLASS ($1,888); billblass.com. *Bracelet,* R.J. GRAZIANO ($60); rjgraziano.com. *Shoes,* TOM FORD ($1,190); tomford.com.

* Price upon request.

CORRECTION: DECEMBER/JANUARY 2016, "THE GOAL STANDARD," PAGE 10, PORTRAIT OF CRISTIANO RONALDO COURTESY OF JEFF MITCHELL-FIFA/FIFA VIA GETTY IMAGES

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MAXIM (ISSN 1092-9789) Volume 20, Number 1 is published 10 times annually by Maxim Inc., 415 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10017, Tel. 212-302-2626. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to: Maxim, P.O. Box 420234, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0234. One-year subscription rates: for U.S., $24.97; for Canada, $34.97; for all other countries, $54.97 in prepaid U.S. funds. Canadian GST Registration #140467846, Publications Agreement number 40031590. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6. We sometimes make our subscriber list available to companies that sell goods and services by mail that we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive such mailings, please send us a note with your current mailing label or address to: Maxim Customer Service, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. • Copyright © 2016 Maxim Media Inc. MAXIM® is a registered trademark owned by Maxim Media Inc. All rights reserved. February issue, Volume 20, Number 1. Maxim is published monthly except for combined issues of Dec/Jan and June/July by Maxim Inc., 415 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Tel. 212-302-2626 Fax 212-302-2635 Maxim.com. Canadian GST Registration # 867774580 • Subscription inquiries, including address changes: Visit us at Maxim.com/customerservice or write to Maxim, P.O. Box 420706, Palm Coast, FL 32142, or call 386-447-6312.

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